1.24.22.

LIBRARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PRINCETON, N. J.

PRESENTED BY

Mrs. William Swan.

Division SCC

Section 10,644

v. 9

SERMONS

ON SEVERAL

SUBJECTS *and* OCCASIONS,

By the moſt Reverend

Dr. *JOHN TILLOTSON*,

LATE

Lord Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*.

VOLUME *the* NINTH.

LONDON:

Printed for *R. Ware*, *A. Ward*, *J.* and *P. Knapton*, *T. Longman*, *R. Hett*, *C. Hitch*, *J. Hodges*, *S. Auſten*, *J.* and *R. Tonſon*, *J.* and *H. Pemberton*, and *J. Rivington*.

MDCCXLIII.

SERMON CLVII.

God the first cause, and last end.

ROM. xi. 36.

For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

HAVING considered the more eminent and absolute perfections of the divine nature, as also that which results from the infinite excellency and perfection of God compared with the imperfection of our understandings, I come in the last place to treat of such as are merely and purely relative; as that he is "the first cause, and the last end" of all things; to which purpose I have chosen these words of the apostle, for the subject of my present discourse; "For "of him, and through him, &c."

The dependance of these words upon the former is briefly this. The apostle had been speaking before in this chapter, several things that might tend to raise us to an admiration of the wisdom, and goodness, and mercy of God, in the dispensation of his grace, for the salvation of men, both Jews and Gentiles, and therefore would have us ascribe this work wholly to God; the contrivance of it to his wisdom, and not to our own counsels, v. 34. "For "who hath known the mind of the Lord? and "who hath been his counsellor?" and the bestowing this grace, to his free goodness and mercy, and not to any desert of ours, v. 35. "Or who hath "first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to "him

SERM. CLVII.

"him again?" Yea and not only in the dispensation of grace, but of all good things; not only in this work of redemption, but also of creation, GOD is the fountain, and original, and first cause, from whence every thing proceeds; and the last end, to which every thing is to be referred. "For of him," &c. ἐξ αὐτοῦ, "from him," the efficient cause producing all things; δι' αὐτοῦ, "by or through him," as the efficient conserving cause of all things; καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν, "and to him," as the final cause of all things, and the end for which they were made.

The proposition I shall speak to is, that GOD is the first cause, and last end.

First, I shall a little explain the terms.

Secondly, confirm the proposition.

Thirdly, apply it.

First, for the explication of the terms.

I. That GOD is the first cause, signifies,

1. Negatively, that he had no cause, did not derive his being from any other, or does depend upon any other being; but that he was always, and eternally of himself.

2. Positively, that he is the cause of all things besides himself, the fountain and original of all created beings, from whom all things proceed, and upon whom all things depend; or, that I may use the expression of St. John, John i. 3. which I know is appropriated to the second person in the Trinity, "By him all things were made, and without him "was nothing made that was made." So that when we attribute to GOD, that he is the first, we mean, that there was nothing before him, and that he was before all things, and that all things are by him.

II. The last end, that is, that all things refer to him; that is, the design and aim of all things that

are made, is the illustration of GOD's glory some way or other, and the manifestation of his perfections.

Secondly, for the confirmation, I shall briefly, according to my usual method, attempt it these two ways.

I. By natural light. The notion of a GOD contains in it all possible perfection. Now the utmost perfection we can imagine, is, for a being to be always of itself, before all other beings, and not only so, but to be the cause of all other beings; that is, that there should be nothing, but what derives it's being from him, and continually depends upon him; from whence follows, that all things must refer to him, as their last end. For every wise agent acts with design, and in order to an end. Now the end is that which is best, which is most worthy the attaining, and that is GOD himself. Now his being and perfections are already, and the best next to the existence of his being and perfections, is the manifestation of them, which is called GOD's glory; and this is the highest end that we can imagine, to which all the effects of the divine power, and goodness, and wisdom, do refer.

And that these titles are to be attributed to GOD, is not only reasonable, when it is revealed and discovered, but was discovered by the natural light of the heathens. Hence it was that Aristotle gave to GOD those titles of the first being, the first cause, and the first mover; and his master Plato calls GOD "the author, and parent of all things, the maker "and architect of the world, and of all creatures; "the fountain and original of all things." Porphyry calls him τὸ πρῶτον, the first, from whence he reasons to this sense, that "he is the ultimate end, "and that all things move towards GOD, that all

"motions

SERM. CLVII.

" motions center in him; because, saith he, it is most " proper and natural for things to refer to their ori- " ginal, and to refer all to him, from whom they " receive all." Antoninus, the emperor and philosopher, speaking of nature (which with the Stoicks signifies GOD) hath these words, which are so very like these of the apostle, that they may seem to be taken from him; ἐκ σοῦ πάντα, ἐν σοὶ πάντα, εἰς σὲ πάντα, " Of thee are all things, in thee are all " things, to thee are all things."

II. From scripture. Hither belong all those places where he declares himself to be " the first, and the " last," Isa. xli. 4. " Who hath wrought and done " it, calling the generations from the beginning? I " the LORD, the first, and with the last, I am he." Isa. xliii. 10. " Before me there was no GOD formed," (or as it is in the margin) " there was nothing form- " ed of GOD, neither shall there be after me." Isa. xliv. 6. " I am the first, and I am the last, and be- " sides me there is no GOD." Isa. xlviii. 12, 13. " I am the first, I am also the last, my hand hath " laid the foundation of the earth, my right hand " hath spread the heavens;" which is as much as to say, he hath made the world, and was the first cause of all things. Rev. i. 8. " I am alpha and " omega, the beginning and the end, saith the " LORD, which is, and which was, and which is " to come."

But more expressly, 1 Cor. viii. 6. " But to us " there is but one GOD, the father, of whom are " all things, and we by him, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτὸν, " and we to him, and for him." Acts xvii. 24. " GOD that made the world, and all things therein." V. 25. " He giveth to all life, and breath, and all " things." V. 28. " In him we live, and move,

" and

" and have our being." V. 29. " For as much then " as we are the off-spring of GOD."

Hither we may refer those texts which attribute the same to the second person in the Trinity, as the eternal wisdom and word of GOD, whereby all things were made, John. i. 3. " All things were made by " him, and without him was nothing made, that " was made." V. 10. " And the world was made " by him." 1 Cor. viii. 6. " And one LORD JESUS " CHRIST, by whom are all things, and we by " him." Eph. iii. 9. " GOD, who created all " things by JESUS CHRIST." Col. i. 16. " By him " were all things created that are in heaven, and " that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether " they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, " or powers, all things were created by him, and " for him, and he is before all things, and by him " all things consist." Heb. i. 2. " By whom also " he made the worlds." And, v. 3. " Upholding all things by the word of his power."

Thirdly and lastly, to apply this doctrine.

Use. First, if GOD be the first cause of all things, who did at first produce all creatures, and does since preserve them and govern them, and disposeth of all their concernments, and orders all things that befal them, from hence let us learn,

1. With humility and thankfulness to own, and acknowledge, and admire and bless GOD as the author and original of our being, as the spring and fountain of all the blessings and good things that we enjoy. If we do but consider what these words signify, that GOD is the first cause of all things, we shall see great reason to own and acknowledge, to adore and praise him, and that with the greatest humility; because we have not given him any thing,

but have received all from him; he is the cause of all things, who did freely and of his own good will and pleasure communicate being to us, without any constraint or necessity, but what his own goodness laid upon him, Rev. iv. 11. "Thou art worthy, O "LORD, to receive glory, and honour, and power; "for thou hast created all things, and for thy plea- "sure they are and were created." We could not, before we were, deserve any thing from him, or move him by any argument, or importune him by intreaties to make us; but he freely gave us being; and ever since we depend upon him, and have been preserved by him, and cannot subsist one moment without the continued influence of the power and goodness which first called us out of nothing. He is the author of all the good, and the fountain of all those blessings, which for the present we enjoy, and for the future hope for.

When he made us at first, he designed us for happiness; and when we by our sin and wilful miscarriage fell short of the happiness which he designed us for, he sent his son into the world for our recovery, and gave his life for the ransom of our souls. He hath not only admitted us into a new covenant, wherein he hath promised pardon, and eternal life to us; but he hath also purchased these blessings for us, by the most endearing price, the blood of his own son, and hath saved us in such a manner as may justly astonish us. Upon these considerations we should awaken ourselves to the praise of GOD, and with the holy Psalmist, call up our spirits, and summon all the powers and faculties of our souls to assist us in this work, Psal. ciii. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. "Bless "the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, "bless his holy name; bless the LORD, O my soul,

and

" and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all " thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who " redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crown- " eth thee with loving kindness and tender mer- " cies;" it is he that " satisfies our souls with good " things," that hath promised eternal life and happiness to us, and must confer and bestow this upon us; " Therefore our souls, and all that is within " us," should " bless his holy name."

2. If GOD be the first cause, that is, orders all things that befal us, and by his providence disposeth of all our concernments, this should teach us with patience and quietness to submit to all events, to all evils and afflictions, that come upon us, as being disposed by his wise providence, and coming from him; we are apt to attribute all things to the next and immediate agent, and to look no higher than second causes; not considering that all the motions of natural causes are directly subordinate to the first cause, and all the actions of free creatures are under the government of GOD's wise providence; so that nothing happens to us besides the designs and intention of GOD.

And methinks this is one particular excellency of the stile of the scripture above all other books, that the constant phrase of the sacred dialect is to attribute all events (excepting sins only) to GOD; so that every one that reads it cannot but take notice, that it is wrote with a more attentive consideration of GOD than any other book, as appears by those frequent and express acknowledgments of GOD as the cause of all events; so that what in other writers would be said to be done by this or that person, is ascribed to GOD. Therefore it is so often said, that

SERM. CLVII.

the LORD did this and that, ſtirred up ſuch an enemy, brought ſuch a judgment. And we ſhall find that holy men in ſcripture make excellent uſe of this conſideration, to argue themſelves into patience and contentedneſs in every condition. So Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the LORD, let him do what ſeemeth "him good." So Job, he did not ſo conſider the Sabeans and Chaldeans, who had carried away his oxen and his camels, and ſlain his ſervants; nor the wind which had thrown down his houſe, and killed his ſons and his daughters; but he looks up to GOD, the great governor and diſpoſer of all theſe events; "The LORD giveth, and the LORD hath "taken away, bleſſed be the name of the LORD." So David, Pſal. xxxvi. 9. "I was dumb, and ſpake "not a word, becauſe thou LORD didſt it." So our bleſſed SAVIOUR, when he was ready to ſuffer, he did not conſider the malice of the Jews, which was the cauſe of his death, but looks to a higher hand; "the cup which my father gives me to "drink, ſhall not I drink it?"

He that looks upon all things as coming from ſecond cauſes, and does not eye the firſt cauſe, the good and wiſe governor, will be apt to take offence at every croſs and unwelcome accident. Men are apt to be angry, when one flings water upon them as they paſs in the ſtreets; but no man is offended if he is wet by rain from heaven. When we look upon evils as coming only from men, we are apt to be impatient, and know not how to bear them; but we ſhould look upon all things as under the government and diſpoſal of the firſt cauſe, and the circumſtances of every condition as allotted to us by the wiſe providence of GOD; this conſideration, that

that it is the hand of GOD, and that he hath done it, would still all the murmurings of our spirits. As when a seditious multitude is in an uproar, the presence of a grave and venerable person will hush the noise, and quell the tumult; so if we would but represent GOD as present to all actions, and governing and disposing all events, this would still and appease our spirits, when they are ready to riot and mutiny against any of his dispensations.

Use the second. If GOD be the last end of all, let us make him our last end, and refer all our actions to his glory. This is that which is due to him, as he is the first cause, and therefore he does most reasonably require it of us.

And herein likewise the scripture doth excel all other books, that is, doth more frequently and expressly mind us of this end, and calls upon us to propose it to ourselves as our ultimate aim and design. We should love him as our chief end, Matth. xxii. 37. "Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with "all thy mind." Thus to love GOD is that which, in the language of the schools, is loving GOD as our chief end. So likewise the apostle requires, that we should refer all the actions of our lives to this end, 1 Cor. x. 31. "Whether ye eat or drink, "do all to the glory of GOD;" that we should "glorify him in our souls, and in our bodies, which "are his." He is the author of all the powers that we have, and therefore we should use them for him; we do all by him, and therefore we should do all to him.

And that we may the better understand ourselves as to this duty, I shall endeavour to give satisfaction to a question or two which may arise about it.

SERM. CLVII.

First, whether an actual intention of GOD's glory be necessary to make every action that we do good and acceptable to GOD?

Answ. 1. It is necessary that the glory of GOD, either formally or virtually, should be the ultimate end and scope of our lives, and all our actions; otherwise they will be defective in that which in moral actions is most considerable, and that is the end. If a man should keep all the commandments of the gospel, this excepted, of making GOD's glory his supreme end, only with a design to gain reputation, or some other advantage in the world, this very thing would vitiate all, and render him unacceptable to GOD.

2. It is very requisite and convenient, as a good sign, that we should very frequently, actually think upon, and intend this end; for if it be very much out of our thoughts, we have reason to be jealous of ourselves, that we do not intend it at all.

3. It is so far from being necessary, that we should in every action have this intention of GOD's glory, that it is not morally possible that we should, no more than it is possible, that a man that goes a journey of a thousand miles, should every step he takes have actual thoughts of his journey's end, nor is it more necessary; for consideration of the end is only so far necessary, as it is necessary to guide and quicken us in the use of means; as it is not necessary for a man to think of his journey's end, farther than to direct and excite him to go thither. And this appears farther by the contrary; it is not necessary to make a sinful action, that a man should formally, much less actually intend GOD's dishonour; it is enough to constitute a man a wicked man, if he willingly transgress GOD's law, the doing whereof

does by conſequence reflect a diſhonour upon him: ſo, on the other hand, it is ſufficient to make an action good and acceptable, if it be conformable to GOD's law, and ſuch as by conſequence redounds to GOD's glory.

Second queſtion. Whether the glory of GOD may, or ought to be conſidered, as an end ſeparate and diſtinct from our own happineſs?

Anſw. I ſhall ſpeak but briefly to this, becauſe I have elſewhere ſpoken to it; but in that little which I have to ſay for ſatisfaction to this queſtion, I will proceed by theſe ſteps.

I. By the glory of GOD, we mean the demonſtration, or illuſtration, or manifeſtation of ſome or of all his perfections, more eſpecially his goodneſs, and mercy, and juſtice, and wiſdom, and power, and holineſs.

II. It is plain, that the manifeſtation of ſome of theſe perfections is a thing that may be ſeparated from the happineſs of a creature; for his holineſs, and juſtice, and power, may and ſhall be manifeſted in the final and eternal ruin of impenitent ſinners.

III. The manifeſtation of any of GOD's perfections, ought many times to be propounded by us as an end diſtinct and ſeparate from our reſpective happineſs; ſuch a happineſs, as reſpects only ſome particulars, and ſome particular duration, in oppoſition to abſolute and eternal happineſs. In this ſenſe our SAVIOUR ſays, that he "ſought not his own glory, "but the glory of him that ſent him:" by which he does not mean, that he quitted everlaſting glory and happineſs; but that, in order to the glory of GOD, he did for a time lay aſide his own glory, and diveſt himſelf of it while he was in this world; for the apoſtle tells us, that he was encouraged to do this

SERM. CLVII.

this out of a respect to a greater glory, Heb. xii. 2. "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of GOD." And in this sense we are to understand the command of self-denial in the gospel, with reference to our particular or temporal, not our eternal interest; and that it is no more, is plain from the argument our SAVIOUR uses to encourage this self-denial, the promise of a far greater happiness than that we deny; no man that "forsakes father or mother for my "sake," but shall "have eternal life:" And proportionably we are to understand those commands of loving CHRIST more than ourselves, that is, more than any temporal interest.

IV. The manifestation of any of GOD's perfections, neither ought, nor can reasonably be propounded by us, as an end separated from, or opposite to our eternal blessedness; that is, we cannot naturally or reasonably desire the glory of GOD should be advanced, though it were to our final ruin, either by annihilation, or eternal misery.

1. We cannot either naturally or reasonably desire GOD should be glorified by our annihilation.

(1.) Not naturally. Because such a desire would be directly contrary to the natural desire of self-preservation, which GOD himself hath planted in us, and is most intimate and essential to our nature.

(2.) Not reasonably. Because it is utterly unimaginable how GOD can be glorified by the annihilation of a creature. All the attributes that we can imagine can be manifested herein, are power and sovereignty; his power hath already been as much manifested in creating and making the creature out of nothing, as it can be by reducing it into nothing; for

for to create is the very same demonstration of power as to annihilate. And as for his sovereignty, GOD will never manifest that in contradiction to his goodness, or wisdom, or any other perfection of the divine nature. To unmake a creature, and to take away the being which he had given, would argue either a failure of his goodness toward the creature, or that he did repent he had made it, which would reflect upon his wisdom and constancy. I do not say, that in justice GOD cannot annihilate a creature; far be it from me: for what he gave was his own, and he may without any wrong to the creature take it again.

2. Much less can we naturally desire that GOD should be glorified in our eternal misery. The reasons which I gave about annihilation are stronger here; therefore we cannot naturally desire it, nor reasonably, for the demonstration of his power, or sovereignty, or justice, or holiness, which I think are all the attributes which we can imagine to be glorified hereby: not as the manifestation of his power; for that would be as much manifested in the happiness, as misery of the creature: not of his sovereignty; for GOD will not manifest that in contradiction to his goodness, upon which nothing can reflect more, than merely, *pro arbitrio*, for his pleasure, to make an innocent creature for ever miserable: Not his justice, and holiness; for these presuppose sin and demerit in the creature, out of hatred to which he makes it miserable; but GOD hath declared that he esteems himself more glorified by the obedience and happiness of his creatures, than by their sin and destruction; and if it were reasonable to desire the justice and holiness of GOD might be glorified in my eternal ruin, which I have deserved

SERM. CLVII.

ed by sin; this would plainly follow from it, that it were reasonable "to sin, that justice might abound," which of the two is a greater absurdity than that which the apostle condemns, of "sinning, that "grace may abound."

V. There is a strict and inviolable connexion between the greatest glory of GOD, and our obedience and happiness: I say, between his greatest glory; because he esteems himself more glorified by the obedience and happiness of his creatures, than by their ruin and misery; and that we may believe it, we have his oath for it; "As I live, saith the LORD, "I delight not in the death of a sinner, but rather "that he should turn, and live." And it is observable, that the apostle, in 1 Cor. x. 31, 32, 33. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, "do all to the glory of GOD; giving none offence, "neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to "the church of GOD; even as I please all men "in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but "the profit of many, that they may be saved," explains the glorifying of GOD, by edifying and promoting the salvation of others.

VI. We may consider the glory of GOD as some ways distinct from our happiness; that is, we may consider the manifestation of his goodness, and mercy, and wisdom, in our happiness, as that which results from it; but this is not enough to make it a distinct end, but the same diversly considered; as the publick good is that which results from the general good of particular persons, but cannot reasonably be propounded by any man, as an end distinct from the general happiness of particular persons, without ruining and destroying the notion of publick good.

VII. Though

VII. Though considered as we are particular beings; we can have no greater end than our own happiness, in which GOD is eminently glorified; yet as we are part of the whole creation and workmanship of GOD, which is the noblest consideration of ourselves, the glory of GOD, which results from the manifestation of all his perfections in and about his creatures, is precisely our ultimate end, and yet not an end really distinct from our own happiness; and therefore it is most proper, and becoming, and agreeable to the wise stile of scripture, to give our end it's denomination, not from the more particular and narrow, but the more noble consideration of ourselves, as we are parts of the whole creation and workmanship of GOD; as it is more generous and becoming for the members of a civil society to mention the publick good as their end, than their private happiness and advantage, though that be so really and effectually promoted by the publick good.

Thus I have finished what I proposed on this argument, and concerning the attributes of GOD in general; "Of whom, and through whom, and to "whom are all things. To him be glory for ever." Amen.

SERMON CLVIII.

Of doing good.

GALAT. vi. 9, 10.

Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not: as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of faith.

SERM. CLVIII.

A Spital Sermon, preached at Chriſt-Church on Eaſter-Tueſday, April 14. 1691.

THE apoſtle in theſe words recommends unto us a great and comprehenſive duty, "the "doing of good;" concerning which the text offers theſe five particulars to our conſideration.

I. The nature of the duty itſelf, which is called "well-doing," v. 9. and "doing good," v. 10.

II. The extent of this duty, in reſpect of it's object, which is all mankind, "Let us do good unto "all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the "houſhold of faith."

III. The meaſure of it, "as we have opportunity."

IV. Our unwearied perſeverance in it; "let us "not be weary in well-doing."

V. The argument and encouragement to it; becauſe "in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not: "Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do "good, &c."

I. I will conſider the nature of the duty itſelf; of "well-doing," and "doing good." And this I ſhall explain to you as briefly as I can, by conſidering the extent of the act of doing good, and the excellency of it. And,

1. The extent of the act. It comprehends in it

all thoſe ways wherein we may be beneficial and uſeful to one another. It reaches not only to the bodies of men, but to their ſouls, that better and more excellent part of ourſelves; and is converſant in all thoſe ways and kinds, whereby we may ſerve the temporal, or ſpiritual good of our neighbour, and promote either his preſent, or his future and eternal happineſs.

To inſtruct the ignorant, or reduce thoſe that are in error; "to turn the diſobedient to the wiſdom of "the juſt," and reclaim thoſe that are engaged in any evil courſe, by good counſel, and ſeaſonable admonition, and by prudent and kind reproof; to reſolve and ſatisfy the doubting mind; to confirm the weak; to heal the broken-hearted, and to comfort the melancholy and troubled ſpirits: Theſe are the nobleſt ways of charity, becauſe they are converſant about the ſouls of men, and tend to procure and promote their eternal felicity.

And then "to feed the hungry, to clothe the "naked, releaſe the impriſoned;" to redeem the captives, and to vindicate thoſe who are injured and oppreſſed in their perſons, or eſtates, or reputation; to repair thoſe who are ruined in their fortunes; and, in a word, to relieve and comfort thoſe who are in any kind of calamity or diſtreſs.

All theſe are but the ſeveral branches and inſtances of this great duty here in the text, of "doing good;" though it hath, in this place, a more particular reſpect to the charitable ſupply of thoſe, who are in want and neceſſity; and therefore with a more particular regard to that, I ſhall diſcourſe of it at this time. You ſee the extent of the duty. We will, in the

2d place, briefly ſay ſomething of the excellency

SERM. CLVIII.

of it, which will appear, if we consider, that it is the imitation of the highest excellency and perfection. To do good, is to be like GOD, who "is good, "and doth good;" and it is to be like him, in that which he esteems his greatest glory. It is to be like the Son of GOD, who, when he was pleased to take our nature upon him, and live here below, and to dwell amongst us, "went about doing good." And it is to be like the blessed angels, the highest rank and order of GOD's creatures; whose great employment it is to be ministring sprits, for the good of men. So that for a man to be kind, and helpful, and beneficial to others, is to be a good angel, and a saviour, and a kind of god too.

It is an argument of a great, and noble, and generous mind, to excite our thoughts and cares to the concernments of others, and to employ our interest, and power, and endeavours for their benefit and advantage: whereas a low, and mean, and narrow spirit, is contracted and shriveled up within itself, and cares only for it's own things, without any regard to the good and happiness of others.

It is the most noble work in the world, because that inclination of mind, which prompts us to do good, is the very temper and disposition of happiness. Solomon, after all his experience of worldly greatness and pleasure, at last pitched upon this, as the great felicity of human life, and the only good use that is to be made of a prosperous and plentiful fortune. Eccles. iii. 12. "I know (says he, speaking of riches) "that there is no good in them, but for "a man to rejoice and do good in his life." And certainly the best way to take joy in an estate, is to do good with it: and a greater and wiser than Solomon has said it, even he "who is the power and "wisdom

SERM. CLVIII.

" wiſdom of GOD" has ſaid it, that " it is a more " bleſſed thing to give than to receive."

Conſider farther, that this is one of the great and ſubſtantial parts of religion, and next to the love and honour, which we pay to Almighty GOD, the moſt acceptable ſervice that we can do to him; it is one table of the law, and next to the firſt and great commandment, of " loving the LORD our GOD," and very like to it. " And the ſecond is like unto " it," (ſays our SAVIOUR) " Thou ſhalt love thy " neighbour as thyſelf;" like to it, in the excellency of it; and equal to it, in the neceſſary obligation of it. " And this commandment (ſays St. John, 1 epiſt. chap. 4. v. 21.) " have we from him, that he who " loveth GOD, love his brother alſo." The firſt commandment indeed excels in the dignity of the object, becauſe it enjoins the love of GOD; but the ſecond ſeems to have the advantage in the reality of it's effects: for the love of GOD conſiſts in our acknowledgment, and honour of him; but our " righte- " ouſneſs and goodneſs extend not to him;" we can do him no real benefit and advantage: but our love to men is really uſeful and beneficial to them; for which reaſon, GOD is contented in many caſes, that the external honour and worſhip, which he requires of us by his poſitive commands, ſhould give way to that natural duty of love and mercy which we owe to one another. " I will have mercy" (ſays GOD in the prophet Amos) " and not ſacrifice."

And to ſhew how great a value GOD puts upon this duty, he hath made it the very teſtimony of our love to himſelf; and for want of it, hath declared that he will reject all our other profeſſions and teſtimonies of love to him, as falſe and inſincere. " Whoſo hath this worlds good," (ſaith St. John, 1 epiſt.

SERM. CLVIII.

1 epiſt. iii. 17.) "and ſeeth his brother have need, "and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from "him, how dwelleth the love of GOD in him?" And again, chap. iv. ver. 20. "If a man ſay, "I love GOD, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; "for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath "ſeen, how can he love GOD, whom he hath not "ſeen?"

You ſee the duty here recommended, both in the extent and in the excellency of it; "let us do good." I proceed to conſider, in the

IId place, the extent of this duty, in reſpect of it's object, which is all mankind, but more eſpecially Chriſtians, thoſe that are of the ſame faith and religion. "Let us do good unto all men, eſpecially "unto thoſe that are of the houſhold of faith." So that the object, about which this duty is converſant, is very large, and takes in all mankind; "let "us do good unto all men." The Jews confined their love and kindneſs to their own kindred and nation; and becauſe they were prohibited familiarity with idolatrous nations, and were enjoined to maintain a perpetual enmity with Amalek, and the ſeven nations of Canaan, whom GOD had caſt out before them, and devoted to ruin; they looked upon themſelves as perfectly diſcharged from all obligation of kindneſs to the reſt of mankind: and yet it is certain, that they were expreſly enjoined by their law, to be kind to ſtrangers, becauſe they themſelves had been ſtrangers in the land of Egypt. But our SAVIOUR hath reſtored this law of love and charity to it's natural and original extent; and hath declared every one that is of the ſame nature with ourſelves to be our neighbour, and our brother; and that he is to be treated by us accordingly, whenever he ſtands

in

in need of our kindneſs and help; and to ſhew that none are out of the compaſs of our charity, he hath expreſly commanded us to extend it to thoſe who of all others can leaſt pretend to it, even our enemies and perſecutors.

So that if the queſtion be about the extent of our charity in general, theſe two things are plainly enjoined by the chriſtian religion.

1. Negatively, That we ſhould not hate nor bear ill-will to any man, or do him any harm or miſchief. "Love worketh no evil to his neighbour," (ſaith the apoſtle) Rom. xiii. 10. And this negative charity every man may exerciſe towards all men, without exception, and that equally, becauſe it does not ſignify any poſitive act, but only that we abſtain from enmity and hatred, from injury and revenge, which it is in every man's power, by the grace of GOD, and the due care and government of himſelf, to do.

2. Poſitively, the law of charity requires, that we ſhould bear an univerſal good-will to all men, and wiſh every man's happineſs, and pray for it, as ſincerely as we wiſh and pray for our own; and if we be ſincere in our wiſhes, and prayers for the good of others, we ſhall be ſo in our endeavours to procure and promote it.

But the great difficulty is, as to the exerciſe of our charity, and the real expreſſions and effects of it, in doing good to others; which is the duty here meant in the text, and (as I told you before) does more particularly relate to the relief of thoſe who are in want and neceſſity. And the reaſon of the difficulty is, becauſe no man can do good to all in this kind, if he would; it not being poſſible for any man to come to the knowledge of every man's neceſſity and diſtreſs; and if he could, no man's ability

can

SERM. CLVIII.

can poſſibly reach to the ſupply and the relief of all mens wants. And indeed this limitation the text gives to this duty; "As we have opportunity (ſays the apoſtle) "let us do good unto all men;" which either ſignifies, as occaſion is offered, or as we have ability of doing, or both; as I ſhall ſhew afterwards.

So that it being impoſſible to exerciſe this charity to all men that ſtand in need of it, it is neceſſary to make a difference, and to uſe prudence and diſcretion in the choice of the moſt fit and proper objects. We do not know the wants of all men, and therefore the bounds of our knowledge do of neceſſity limit our charity within a certain compaſs; and of thoſe whom we do know, we can relieve but a ſmall part for want of ability; from whence it follows, that though a man were never ſo charitably diſpoſed, yet he muſt of neceſſity ſet ſome rules to himſelf, for the management of his charity to the beſt advantage. What thoſe rules are, cannot minutely and nicely be determined; when all is done, much muſt be left to every man's prudence and diſcretion, upon a full view and conſideration of the caſe before him, and all the circumſtances of it; but yet ſuch general rules may be given, as may ſerve for the direction of our practice in moſt caſes; and for the reſt, every man's prudence, as well as it can, muſt determine the matter. And the rules which I ſhall give, ſhall be theſe.

Firſt, Caſes of extremity ought to take the firſt place, and do for that time challenge precedence of all other conſiderations. If a perſon be in great and preſent diſtreſs, and his neceſſity ſo urgent, that if he be not immediately relieved, he muſt periſh; this is ſo violent a caſe, and calls ſo loud for preſent help, that there is no reſiſting of it, whatever the perſon be; though a perfect ſtranger to us, though moſt

SERM. CLVIII.

moſt unworthy, though the greateſt enemy we have in the world, yet the greatneſs of his diſtreſs does ſo ſtrongly plead for him, as to ſilence all conſiderations to the contrary; for after all, he is a man, and is of the ſame nature with ourſelves; and the conſideration of humanity ought, for that time, to prevail over all objections againſt the man, and to prefer him to our charity, before the neareſt relation and friend, who is not in the like extremity. In other caſes we not only may, but ought to relieve our friends, and thoſe that have deſerved well of us in the firſt place: but if our enemy be in extremity, then that divine precept takes place, "if thine "enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him "drink."

Secondly, In the next place, I think, that the obligation of nature, and the nearneſs of relation, does challenge a preference; for there is all the reaſon in the world, if other things be equal, that we ſhould conſider and ſupply the neceſſity of thoſe, who are of our blood and kindred, and members of our family, before the neceſſities of ſtrangers, and thoſe who have no relation to us. There is a ſpecial duty incumbent upon us, and another obligation beſide that of charity, to have a particular care and regard for them. In this caſe not only chriſtianity, but nature ties this duty upon us, 1 Tim. v. 8. "If any "man provide not for his own, eſpecially for thoſe "of his own houſe," for them that are of his family, "he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an "infidel;" that is, he doth not only offend againſt the law of chriſtianity, but againſt the very dictates of nature, which prevail even amongſt infidels. And our SAVIOUR hath told us, that when our parents ſtand in need of relief, it is more acceptable to

SERM. CLVIII.

God, to employ our estates that way, than to devote them to him, and his immediate service; and that it is a kind of sacrilege to consecrate that to God, whereby our parents may be profited, and provided for in their necessity.

Thirdly, the obligation of kindness, and benefits, lays the next claim to our charity. If they fall into want, who have obliged us by their former kindness and charity, both justice and charity do challenge from us a particular consideration of their case; and proportionably, if we ourselves have been obliged to their family, or to any other that are nearly related to them.

Fourthly, those "who are of the household of faith," and of the same religion, and members of the same mystical body, and do partake of the same holy mysteries, the body and blood of our blessed Saviour, the strictest bond of love and charity; these fall under a very particular consideration in the exercise of our charity: and of this the apostle puts us in mind, in the last words of my text; "Let "us do good unto all men, especially unto those "that are of the household of faith." God hath a special love and regard for such; and those whom God loves ought to be very dear to us.

And this, perhaps, was a consideration of the first rank, in those times when Christians lived among heathens, and were exposed to continual wants and sufferings; but it signifies much less now, that Christianity is the general profession of a nation, and is too often made use of to very uncharitable purposes; to confine mens bounty and benefits to their own sect and party, as if they, and none but they, were "the household of faith;" a principle, which I know not whether it hath more of judaism or of popery in it.

Fifthly,

SERM. CLVIII.

Fifthly, after these, the merit of the persons who are the objects of our charity, and all the circumstances belonging to them, are to be valued and considered, and we accordingly to proportion our charity, and the degrees of it. I shall instance in some particulars, by which a prudent man may judge of the rest.

Those who labour in an honest calling, but yet are oppressed with their charge, or disabled for a time by sickness, or some other casualty; these many a time need as much, and certainly deserve much better than common beggars; for these are useful members of the commonwealth; and we cannot place our charity better, than upon these, who do what they can to support themselves.

Those likewise who are fallen from a rich and plentiful condition, without any fault or prodigality of their own, merely by the providence of God, or some general calamity; these are more especially objects of our charity, and liberal relief.

And those also, who have been charitable, and have liberally relieved others, when they were in condition to do it; or the children, or near relations of those who were eminently charitable and beneficial to mankind, do deserve a particular regard in our charity. Mankind being (as I may say) bound in justice, and for the honour of God's providence, to make good his promise, to preserve such from extreme necessity.

And lastly, those, whose visible wants, and great age and infirmities, do plead for more than ordinary pity, and do, at first sight, convince every one that sees them, that they do not beg out of laziness, but of necessity, and because they are not able to do any thing towards their own support and subsistence.

SERM. CLVIII.

There are innumerable circumſtances more, which it would be endleſs to reckon up; but theſe which I have mentioned are ſome of the chief; and, by proportion to theſe, we may direct ourſelves in other caſes.

Sixthly, thoſe whom we certainly know to be true objects of charity, are to be conſidered by us, before thoſe who are ſtrangers to us, and whoſe condition we do not know, yea though, in common charity, we do not diſbelieve them; becauſe in reaſon and prudence we are obliged to prefer thoſe, who are certainly known to us; ſince we find by experience, that there are many cheats and counterfeit beggars, who can tell their ſtory, and carry about teſtimonials of their own making; and likewiſe becauſe we run the hazard of miſplacing our charity, when there are objects enough beſides, where we are ſure we ſhall place it right; and charity miſplaced, as it is in truth and reality no charity in itſelf, ſo it is hardly any in us, when we ſquander it ſo imprudently, as to paſs by a certain and real object, and give it to thoſe of whom we are not certain that they are true objects of charity. In this blind way a man "may give all his goods to the poor," as he thinks, and yet do no real charity. And therefore, unleſs we be able to relieve "every one that aſks," we muſt of neceſſity make a difference, and uſe our beſt prudence in the choice of the moſt proper objects of our charity.

And yet we ought not to obſerve this rule ſo ſtrictly, as to ſhut out all whom we do not know, without exception; becauſe their caſe, if it be true, may ſometimes be much more pitiable, and of greater extremity, than the caſe of many whom we do know; and then it would be uncharitable to reject ſuch,

ſuch, and to harden our hearts ſo far againſt them, as utterly to diſbelieve them; becauſe it is no fault of theirs, that we do not know them; no, their wants may be real, notwithſtanding that; eſpecially when their extremity ſeems great, we ought not to ſtand upon too rigorous a proof and evidence of it, but ſhould accept of a fair probability.

Seventhly, thoſe who ſuffer for the cauſe of religion, and are ſtripped of all for the ſake of it, ought to have a great precedence in our charity to moſt other caſes. And this of late hath been, and ſtill is the caſe of many among us, who have fled hither for refuge, from the tyranny and cruelty of their perſecutors, and have been, by a moſt extraordinary charity of the whole nation, more than once extended to them, moſt ſeaſonably relieved: but eſpecially by the bounty of this great city, whoſe liberality, upon theſe occaſions, hath been beyond all example, and even all belief. And I have often thought, that this very thing, next to the mercy and goodneſs of Almighty GOD, hath had a particular influence upon our preſervation and deliverance from thoſe terrible calamities, which were juſt ready to break in upon us; and, were we not ſo ſtupidly inſenſible of this great deliverance which GOD hath wrought for us, and ſo horribly unthankful to him, and to the happy inſtruments of it, might ſtill be a means to continue the favour of GOD to us. And what cauſe have we to thank GOD, who hath allotted to us this more bleſſed, and more merciful part, to give, and not to receive; to be free from perſecution ourſelves, that we might give refuge and relief to thoſe that are perſecuted!

III. We muſt conſider the meaſure of our charity, ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, which our tranſlation renders, "as

SERM. CLVIII.

"as we have opportunity;" others, as we have ability: So that this expreſſion may refer, either to the occaſions of our charity, or to the ſeaſon of it, or to the proportion and degree of it.

1. It may refer to the occaſions of our charity, "as we have opportunity, let us do good," that is, according as the occaſions of doing good ſhall preſent themſelves to us, ſo often as an opportunity is offered. And this is an argument of a very good and charitable diſpoſition, gladly to lay hold of the occaſions of doing good; as it were to meet opportunities when they are coming towards us. This forwardneſs of mind in the work of charity, the apoſtle commends in the Corinthians, 2 Cor. ix. 2. "I know the forwardneſs of your minds, for which "I boaſt of you to them of Macedonia:" And this he requires of all Chriſtians, Tit. iii. 8. that they ſhould "be ready to every good work;" and 1 Tim. vi. 18. that we be "ready to diſtribute, "willing to communicate." Some are very ready to decline theſe opportunities, and to get out of the way of them; and when they thruſt themſelves upon them, and they cannot avoid them, they do what they do grudgingly, and not with a willing mind.

2. It may refer to the ſeaſon of this duty, ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, whilſt we have time, ὡς for ἕως, whilſt this life laſts; ſo Grotius does underſtand and interpret this phraſe; and then the apoſtle does hereby intimate to them the uncertainty of their lives, eſpecially in thoſe times of perſecution. And this conſideration holds in all times, in ſome degree, that our lives are ſhort and uncertain; that it is but a little while that we can ſerve GOD in this kind, namely, while we are in this world, in this vale of miſery and wants. In the next world there will be no occaſion,

no

no opportunity for it; we shall then have nothing to do, but to reap the reward of the good we have done in this life, and to receive that blessed sentence from the mouth of the great judge of the world, "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, before the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, &c." And, *Euge bone serve!* "Well done, good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful in a little, and I will make thee ruler over much." God will then declare his bounty and goodness to us, and open those inexhaustible treasures of glory and happiness, which all good men shall partake of, in proportion to the good which they have done in this world. Or else,

3. (Which I take to be the most probable meaning of this phrase,) It may refer to the degree of this duty, in proportion to our ability and estate; as we have ability, "let us do good unto all men." And this the phrase will bear, as learned men have observed; and it is very reasonable to take it in this sense, at least as part of the meaning of it, either expressed, or implied. For, without this, we cannot exercise charity, though there were never so many occasions for it; and then this precept will be of the same importance with that of the son of Sirach, Eccluſ. xxxv. 10. "Give unto the most high according as he hath enriched thee;" and with that counsel, Tob. iv. 7. "Give alms, ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων, according to thy substance," and v. 8. "If thou hast abundance, give alms accordingly." And this may be reasonably expected from us; for where-ever his providence gives a man an estate, it is but in trust for certain uses and purposes, among which charity and alms is the chief: and we must

SERM. CLVIII.

be accountable to him, whether we have disposed it faithfully to the ends for which it was committed to us. It is an easy thing, with him, to level mens estates, and to give every man a competency; but he does on purpose suffer things to be distributed so unequally, to try and exercise the virtues of men in several ways; the faith and patience of the poor, the contentedness of those in a middle condition, the charity and bounty of the rich. And, in truth, wealth and riches, that is, an estate above what sufficeth our real occasions and necessities, is in no other sense a blessing, than as it is an opportunity put into our hands, by the providence of God, of doing more good; and if we do not faithfully employ it to this end, it is but a temptation and a snare; "and "the rust of our silver and our gold will be a wit-"ness against us;" and we do but "heap up trea-"sures together against the last day."

But what proportion our charity ought to bear to our estates, I shall not undertake to determine. The circumstances of men have too much variety in them to admit of any certain rule; some may do well, and others may do better; every man as God hath put into his heart, and according to his belief of "the recompence which shall be made at "the resurrection of the just." I shall only say in general, that if there be first a free and willing mind, that will make a man charitable to his power; for "the liberal man will devise liberal things." And we cannot propose a better pattern to ourselves in this kind, than the king and queen, who are, as they ought to be (but as it very seldom happens) the most bright and shining examples of this greatest of all graces and virtues, charity and compassion to the poor and persecuted. I proceed to the

IV. Thing

SERM. CLVIII.

IVth thing conſiderable in the text, viz. Our unwearied perſeverance in this work of doing good; "let us not be weary in well-doing." After we have done ſome few acts of charity, yea, though they ſhould be very conſiderable, we muſt not ſit down and ſay we have done enough: There will ſtill be new objects, new occaſions, new opportunities for the exerciſe of our charity, ſpringing up and preſenting themſelves to us. Let us never think that we can do enough in the way of doing good. The beſt and the happieſt beings are moſt conſtant and unwearied in this work of doing good. The holy angels of GOD are continually employed in miniſtring for the good of "thoſe, who ſhall be heirs of ſalva-"tion:" and the Son of GOD, when he appeared in our nature, and "dwelt among us," that he might be a perfect and familiar example to us of all holineſs and virtue, "he went about doing good" to the bodies, and to the ſouls of men. How diligent and unwearied was he in this work! It was his employment and his pleaſure, his meat and drink, the joy and the life of his life. And GOD himſelf, though he is infinitely and perfectly good in himſelf, yet he ſtill continues "to do good," and is never weary of this bleſſed work. It is the nature, and the perfection, and the felicity of GOD himſelf; and how can we be weary of that work, which is an imitation of the higheſt excellency and perfection, and the very eſſence of happineſs!

V. And laſtly, here is the argument and encouragement to the chearful diſcharge of this duty, "becauſe in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint "not; therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do "good unto all men. In due ſeaſon we ſhall reap;" that is, ſooner or later, in this world, or in the

other, we ſhall receive the full reward of our well-doing.

And now I have explained this duty to you, as plainly and briefly as I could, the hardeſt part of my taſk is yet behind, to perſuade men to the practice of it; and to this purpoſe I ſhall only inſiſt upon the promiſe in the text, "be not weary in well-doing; "for in due ſeaſon ye ſhall reap, if ye faint not:" We ſhall reap the pleaſure and ſatisfaction of it in our own minds, and all the other mighty advantages of it in this world, and the vaſt and unſpeakable reward of it in the other.

Firſt, We ſhall reap the pleaſure and ſatisfaction of it in our own minds; and there is no ſenſual pleaſure that is comparable to the delight of doing good. This Cato makes his boaſt of, as the great comfort and joy of his old age, *conſcientia benè actæ vitæ, multorumque benefactorum recordatio jucundiſſima.* The remembrance of a well-ſpent life, and of many benefits and kindneſſes done by us to others, is one of the moſt pleaſant things in the world. Senſual pleaſures ſoon die and vaniſh; but that is not the worſt of them, they leave a ſting behind them; and when the pleaſure is gone, nothing remains but guilt, and trouble, and repentance: whereas the reflection upon any good we have done, is a perpetual ſpring of peace and pleaſure, to us, and no trouble and bitterneſs enſues upon it; the thoughts of it lie even and eaſy in our minds; and ſo often as it comes to our remembrance, it miniſters freſh comfort to us.

Secondly, We ſhall likewiſe reap other mighty advantages by it in this world. It is the way to derive a laſting bleſſing upon our eſtates. What we give in alms and charity is conſecrated to GOD, and is one of the chiefeſt and moſt acceptable ſacrifices in the

SERM. CLVIII.

the chriſtian religion: ſo the apoſtle tells us, Heb. xiii. 16. "To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with ſuch ſacrifices GOD is well "pleaſed." It is like the firſt-fruits under the law, which being dedicated and offered up to GOD, did derive a bleſſing upon their whole harveſt.

And it procures for us alſo the bleſſing and prayers of thoſe to whom we extend our charity; their bleſſing, I ſay, upon us and ours, and all that we have: and "is it a ſmall thing in our eye, to have" (as Job ſpeaks) "the bleſſing of them, who are "ready to periſh, to come upon us?" "The fervent "prayer" of the poor for us "availeth much;" for GOD hath a ſpecial "regard to the prayers of the de-"ſtitute, and his ear is open to their cry."

Few men have faith to believe it, but certainly charity is a great ſecurity to us in the times of evil, and that not only from the ſpecial promiſe and providence of GOD, which is engaged to preſerve thoſe from want, who are ready to relieve the neceſſity of others, Prov. xi. 25. "The liberal ſoul ſhall be "made fat; and he that watereth, ſhall be watered "alſo himſelf," and Prov. xxviii. 27. "He that "giveth unto the poor ſhall not lack. He ſhall not "be afraid in the evil time, and in the days of dearth "he ſhall be ſatisfied," ſays the Pſalmiſt. But beſides the promiſe and providence of GOD, our charity and alms are likewiſe a great ſecurity to us, from the nature and reaſon of the thing itſelf. Whoſoever is charitable to others, does wiſely beſpeak the charity and kindneſs of others for himſelf, againſt the day of neceſſity; for there is nothing that makes a man more and ſurer friends, than our bounty; this will plead for us, and ſtand our friend in our greateſt troubles and dangers; "for a good man," ſaith

the apoſtle, that is, for one that is ready to oblige others by great kindneſſes and benefits, "one would "even dare to die." It has ſometimes happened, that the obligation which a man hath laid upon others by a chearful and ſeaſonable charity, hath, in time of danger and extremity, done him more kindneſs than all his eſtate could do for him. "Alms," ſaith the wiſe man, "hath delivered from death."

And in times of publick diſtreſs, and when we are beſet with cruel and powerful enemies, who, "if "God were not on our ſide, would ſwallow us up "quick," the publick charity of a nation does many times prove it's beſt ſafeguard and ſhield. There is a moſt remarkable paſſage to this purpoſe, Eccluſ. xxix. 11, 12, 13. "Lay up thy treaſure accord- "ing to the commandments of the moſt High, and "it ſhall bring thee more profit, than gold. Shut "up alms in thy ſtore-houſes, and it ſhall deliver "thee from all affliction. It ſhall fight for thee a- "gainſt thine enemies, better than a mighty ſhield "and a ſtrong ſpear."

And of this I doubt not but we of this nation, by the great mercy and goodneſs of Almighty God, have had happy experience in our late wonderful deliverance, under the conduct and valour of one of the beſt and braveſt of princes, and to whom, by too many among us, the moſt unworthy and unthankful returns have been made, for the unwearied pains he hath undergone, and for the deſperate hazards he hath expoſed himſelf to for our ſakes, that ever were made to ſo great and generous a benefactor; ſo great a benefactor, I ſay, not only to theſe nations, but to all Europe, in aſſerting and vindicating their liberties againſt the inſolent tyranny and pride of one of the greateſt oppreſſors of mankind; of whom I

may say, as Job does of the Leviathan, Job xli. 33, 34. "Upon earth there is not his like. He beholdeth all high things; he is king over all the children of pride." SERM. CLVIII.

And beyond all this, the blessing of God does descend upon the posterity of those who are eminently charitable, and great benefactors to mankind. This David observes in his time; "I have been "young" (says he) "and now am old; yet have "I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed "begging bread;" and what he means by the righteous man, he explains in the next words, "he is "ever merciful, and lendeth."

I shall only add upon this head, that the practice of this virtue will be one of our best comforts at the hour of death, and that we shall then look back upon all the good we have done in our life with the greatest contentment and joy imaginable. Xenophon, in his Cyrus, which he designed for the perfect idea of a good prince, represents him in the last minutes of his life, addressing himself to God to this purpose, "Thou knowest that I have been a lover of "mankind; and now that I am leaving this world, "I hope to find that mercy from thee, which I have "shewed to others." These words that excellent heathen historian thought fit to come from the mouth of so excellent a prince, as he had described him, just as he was leaving the world; by which we may see, what the light of nature thought to be the best comfort of a dying man. This brings me to the

Third and last particular which I mentioned, the vast and unspeakable reward, which this grace and virtue of charity will meet with in the other world. It will plead for us at the day of judgment, and procure for us a most glorious "recompence at the

"resurrection

SERM. CLVIII.

resurrection of the just," and that proportionable to the degrees of our charity; 2 Cor. ix. 6. "He "which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly:" "and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap boun- "tifully;" and from this consideration, the apostle encourageth our perseverance in well-doing; "let us "not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall "reap, if we faint not;" that is, we shall certainly meet with the reward of it, if not in this world, yet in the other.

And now that I have declared this duty to you, together with the mighty pleasure, and advantages, and rewards of it, I crave leave to present you with some of the best occasions, and opportunities of the exercise and practice of it. And for your encouragement hereto, I shall read to you the present state of the chief hospitals belonging to this great city, and of the disposal of their charity for the last year.

And now I have laid before you these great objects of your charity, and the best arguments I could think of to incline and stir up your minds to the exercise of this excellent grace and virtue; as there is no time left for it, I having, I am afraid, already tired your patience, so, I hope, there is no need to press this duty any farther upon you, since you are willing and forward of yourselves, and so very ready to every good work. This great city hath a double honour due to it, of being both the greatest benefactors in this kind, and the most faithful managers, and disposers of it; and I am now in a place most proper for the mention of CHRIST'S Hospital, a protestant foundation of that most pious and excellent prince Edward VI. which, I believe, is one of the best instances of so large and so well-managed a charity, this day in the world.

And

And now to conclude all: if any of you know any better employment than "to do good;" any work that will give truer pleasure to our minds; that hath greater and better promises made to it, "the promises of the life that now is, and that "which is to come;" that we shall reflect upon with more comfort, when we come to die; and that through the mercies and merits of our blessed SAVIOUR, will stand us in more stead at the day of judgment; let us mind that work: but if we do not, let us apply ourselves to this business of charity with all our might, and "let us not be weary in well-"doing, because in due season we shall reap, if we "faint not."

"Now the GOD of peace, who brought again "from the dead our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the "great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood "of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in "every good work, to do his will, through JESUS "CHRIST, to whom with thee, O father, and the "Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, thanksgiv-"ing and praise, both now and for ever," Amen.

SERMON CLIX.

The necessity of repentance and faith.

ACTS xx. 21.

Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward GOD, *and faith toward our* LORD JESUS CHRIST.

TO have seen St. Paul in the pulpit, was one of those three things which St. Augustine thought worth the wishing for. And sure it were very desi-

SERM. CLIX.

rable

SERM. CLIX.

rable to have ſeen this glorious inſtrument of GOD, who did ſuch wonders in the world, to have heard that plain and powerful eloquence of his, which was ſo "mighty through GOD, for the caſting down of "ſtrong holds, and the ſubduing of men to the "obedience of the goſpel;" to have beheld the zeal of this holy man, who was all on fire for GOD, with what ardency of affection, and earneſtneſs of expreſſion, he perſuaded men to come in to CHRIST, and entertain the goſpel. This were very deſirable; but ſeeing it is a thing we cannot hope for, it ſhould be ſome ſatisfaction to our curioſity, to know what St. Paul preached, what was the main ſubject of his ſermons, whither he referred all his diſcourſes, and what they tended to. This he tells us in the words that I have read to you, that the main ſubſtance of all his ſermons was "repentance toward GOD, and "faith toward our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

The occaſion of the words was briefly this; St. Paul being in his journey to Jeruſalem, and intending to be there by the day of Pentecoſt, that he might not be hindred in his journey, he reſolves to paſs by Epheſus, and only to call to him the elders of the church to charge them with their duty, and the care of the church; and to engage them hereto, he tells them how he had carried and demeaned himſelf among them, v. 18. with what diligence and vigilance he had watched over them, with what affection and earneſtneſs he had preached to them, v. 19, 20. And here in the text he tells them, what had been the ſum of his doctrine, and the ſubſtance of thoſe many ſermons he had preached among them, and what was the end and deſign of all his diſcourſes, viz. To perſuade men to "repentance toward GOD, "and faith toward our LORD JESUS CHRIST; teſ-"tifying both to the Jews and Greeks, &c. I ſhall

SERM. CLIX.

I ſhall explain the words a little, and then fix upon the obſervations which I intend to ſpeak to, becauſe I deſign this only as a preface to ſome larger diſcourſes of faith and repentance.

For explication. Teſtifying, the word is διαμαρτυρόμενος, which ſignifies to teſtify, to prove a thing by teſtimony; ſo it is uſed, Heb. ii. 6. "But one "in a certain place teſtifieth, ſaying." In heathen writers the word is often uſed in a law ſenſe, for conteſting by law, and pleading in a cauſe; and from hence it ſignifies, earneſtly to contend or perſuade by arguments and threatenings. In the uſe of the LXX. it ſignifies to proteſt, to convince, to preſs earneſtly, to perſuade. It is uſed moſt frequently by St. Luke in a very intenſe ſignification, and is ſometimes joined with exhorting, which is an earneſt perſuading to a thing, Acts ii. 40. "And with "many other words did he teſtify and exhort, ſay-"ing, ſave yourſelves from this untoward genera-"tion;" and with preaching, Acts viii. 25. "And "when they had teſtified and preached the word of "the LORD;" and ſo Acts xviii. 5. "Being preſſed "in ſpirit, he teſtified to the Jews, that JESUS was "the CHRIST." Being preſſed in ſpirit, ſignifies intention and vehemency in teſtifying to them, that he did vehemently endeavour to convince them; it ſeems to be equivalent to the expreſſion, v. 28. where it is ſaid, "Apollos did mightily convince the Jews that "JESUS was the CHRIST;" that is, did uſe ſuch perſuaſions and arguments as were ſufficient to convince; and to mention no more, Acts xxviii. 23. "He "expounded and teſtified the kingdom of GOD, "perſuading them concerning JESUS."

S. Paul in his epiſtle to Timothy uſeth theſe words in a moſt vehement ſenſe, for giving a ſolemn charge,

SERM. CLIX.

1 Tim. v. 21. "I charge thee before GOD and the "LORD JESUS CHRIST," the word is διαμαρτύρομαι; and ſo 2 Tim. ii. 14. "charging them before "the LORD, that they ſtrive not about words;" and ſo 2 Tim. iv. 1. "I charge thee before GOD "and the LORD JESUS CHRIST;" and here in the text the word ſeems to be of a very high and intenſe ſignification, becauſe of the circumſtances mentioned before and after; he tells us before, that he taught them "at all ſeaſons," v. 18. "publickly and from "houſe to houſe," v. 20. And afterwards at the "31ſt. v. that "he warned them day and night "with tears." So that "teſtifying to the Jews re-"pentance and faith," muſt ſignify his preſſing and perſuading of them with the greateſt vehemency, to turn from their ſins, and believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST; his charging on them theſe things as their duty, his pleading with them the neceſſity of faith and repentance, and earneſtly endeavouring to convince them thereof.

"Repentance toward GOD, and faith toward our "LORD JESUS CHRIST:" what is the reaſon of this appropriation of repentance and faith, the one as properly reſpecting GOD, and the other our LORD JESUS CHRIST? I anſwer. Repentance doth properly reſpect GOD, becauſe he is the party offended, and to whom we are to be reconciled; the faith of the Goſpel doth properly refer to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the chief and principal object of it; ſo that by "teſtifying to them repentance toward "GOD, &c. we are to underſtand that the apoſtle did earneſtly preſs and perſuade them to repent of their ſins, whereby they had offended GOD, and to believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the Meſſias, the perſon that was ordained of GOD, and ſent to be the SAVIOUR of the world.

From

SERM. CLIX.

From the words thus explained, this is the obſervation that doth naturally ariſe,

That repentance and faith are the ſum and ſubſtance of the goſpel; and that miniſters ought with all earneſtneſs and vehemency to preſs people to repent and believe, to charge them with theſe as their duty, and by all means to endeavour to convince them of the neceſſity of them.

In the handling of this I ſhall do theſe two things.

Firſt, ſhew you what is included in repentance and faith, that you may ſee that they are the ſum of the goſpel. And,

Secondly, ſhew you the neceſſity of them.

Firſt, What is included in theſe.

I. Repentance; this properly ſignifies a change of mind, a conviction that we have done amiſs, ſo as to be truly ſorry for what we have done, and heartily to wiſh that we had not done it. To repent, is to alter our mind, to have other apprehenſions of things than we had, to look upon that now as evil, which we did not before; from whence follows ſorrow for what we have done, and a reſolution of mind for the future not to do again that which appears now to us to be ſo evil, that we are aſhamed of it, and troubled for it, and wiſh we had never done it. So that repentance implies a conviction that we have done ſomething that is evil and ſinful, contrary to the law we are under, and thoſe obligations of duty and gratitude that lie upon us, whereby GOD is highly provoked and incenſed againſt us, and we in danger of his wrath, and the ſad effects of his diſpleaſure; upon which we are troubled, and grieved, and aſhamed for what we have done, and wiſh we had been wiſer, and had done otherwiſe; hereupon we reſolve never to do any thing that is ſinful, that is con-

SERM. CLIX.

trary to our duty and obligations to GOD, and by which we may provoke him againſt us. Theſe two things are contained in a true repentance, a deep ſenſe of, and ſorrow for the evils that are paſt, and the ſins that we have committed; and a firm purpoſe and reſolution of obedience for the future, of abſtaining from all ſin, and doing whatever is our duty; the true effect of which reſolution, is the breaking off the practice of ſin, and the courſe of a wicked life, and a conſtant courſe of obedience.

II. Faith in CHRIST is an effectual believing the revelation of the goſpel, the hiſtory and the doctrine of it; the hiſtory of it, that there was ſuch a perſon as JESUS CHRIST, that he was the true Meſſias, propheſied of and promiſed in the Old Teſtament, that he was born and lived and preached, and wrought the miracles that are recorded, that he was crucified and roſe again, and aſcended into heaven, that he was "the Son of GOD," and ſent by him into the world, by his doctrine to inſtruct, and by the example of his life to go before us in the way to happineſs, and by the merit and ſatisfaction of his death and ſufferings, to appeaſe and reconcile GOD to us, and to purchaſe for us the pardon of our ſins and eternal life, upon the conditions of faith and repentance and ſincere obedience; and that to enable us to the performance of theſe conditions, he promiſed, and afterward ſent his holy Spirit, to accompany the preaching of his goſpel, and to aſſiſt all Chriſtians to the doing of that which GOD requires of them; this is the hiſtory of the goſpel.

Now the doctrine of it contains the precepts and promiſes and threatenings of it, and faith in CHRIST includes a firm belief of all theſe; of the precepts of the goſpel as the matter of our duty, and the rule

rule of our life; and of the promiſes and threatenings of the goſpel, as arguments to our duty, to encourage our obedience, and deter us from ſin. So that he that believes the LORD JESUS, believes him to be the great guide and teacher ſent from GOD, to bring and conduct men to eternal happineſs, and that therefore we ought to hearken to him and follow him; this is to believe his prophetical office. He believes that he is "the author of ſalvation," and hath purchaſed for us forgiveneſs of ſins, ranſom from hell, and eternal life and bleſſedneſs upon the conditions before mentioned, and therefore that we ought to rely upon him only for ſalvation, to own him for our SAVIOUR, and to beg of him his holy Spirit, which he hath promiſed to us, to enable us to perform the conditions required on our part; this is to believe his prieſtly office. And laſtly, he believes that the precepts of the goſpel, being delivered to us by the Son of GOD, ought to have the authority of laws upon us, and that we are bound to be obedient to them; and for our encouragement if we be ſo, that there is a glorious and eternal reward promiſed to us; and for our terror if we be not, there are terrible and eternal puniſhments threatened to us; to which rewards, the LORD JESUS CHRIST at the day of judgment will ſentence men, as the great judge of the world; and this is to believe the kingly office of CHRIST. And this is the ſum of that which is meant by "faith toward the LORD JESUS "CHRIST," which the apoſtle ſaith was one ſubject of his preaching.

And the proper and genuine effect of this faith is to live as we believe, to conform our lives to the doctrine, to the truth whereof we aſſent. Hence it is that true Chriſtians, that is, thoſe who faſhioned their

SERM. CLIX.

lives according to the goſpel, are called believers; and the whole of chriſtianity is many times contained in this word believing, which is the great principle of a chriſtian life. As in the old teſtament all religion is expreſſed by "the fear of GOD;" ſo in the new, by "faith in CHRIST."

And now you ſee what is included in repentance and faith, you may eaſily judge whether theſe be not the ſum of the goſpel, that men ſhould forſake their ſins and turn to GOD, and believe in the revelation of the goſpel concerning JESUS CHRIST, that is, heartily entertain and ſubmit to it. What did CHRIST preach to the Jews, but that they ſhould repent of their ſins, and believe on him as the Meſſias? And what did the apoſtles preach, but to the ſame purpoſe? When St. Peter preached to the Jews, Acts ii. the effect of his ſermon and the ſcope of it was to perſuade them "to repent and be baptized in the "name of JESUS," that is, to profeſs their belief in him, v. 38. And ſo Acts iii. 19. This is the concluſion of his diſcourſe, "repent therefore and be "converted," and then he propounded CHRIST to them as the object of their faith, being the great prophet that was propheſied of by Moſes, who ſhould "be raiſed up among them," v. 22. So likewiſe St. Paul when he preached to the Jews and Gentiles, theſe were his great ſubjects, Acts xvii. 30. This is the concluſion of his ſermon to the Athenians, to perſuade them to repent by the conſideration of a future judgment; and to perſuade them to believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who was to be the judge of the world, from the miracle of his reſurrection; "But now he commands all men every "where to repent, becauſe he hath appointed a day, "&c. whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men,

"in

" in that he hath raiſed him from the dead." So that you ſee that theſe are the great doctrines of the goſpel, and were the ſum of the apoſtles preaching; all their ſermons were perſuaſives to theſe two duties of repentance and faith. SERM. CLIX.

Secondly, for the neceſſity of theſe doctrines. They are neceſſary for the eſcaping of eternal miſery, and attaining of everlaſting happineſs. And this will appear, by conſidering the nature of them, and the relation they have to both theſe.

For the avoiding of eternal puniſhment, it is neceſſary the guilt ſhould be removed, which is an obligation to puniſhment, and that cannot be but by pardon; and ſure we cannot imagine that GOD will ever pardon us without repentance; he will never remit to us the puniſhment of ſin, ſo long as we tell him we are not at all troubled for what we have done, and we are of the ſame mind ſtill, and will do the ſame again; and till we repent, we tell GOD this, and we may be ſure GOD will not caſt away his pardons upon thoſe that deſpiſe them; ſo that repentance is neceſſary to the eſcaping of hell.

And faith in CHRIST is neceſſary to it; for if this be the method of GOD's grace, not to pardon ſin without ſatisfaction, and JESUS CHRIST hath made ſatisfaction for ſin by the merit of his ſufferings, and if it be neceſſary that we ſhould believe this, that the benefit hereof may redound to us; then faith in CHRIST is neceſſary to the obtaining of the pardon of ſin, by which the guilt of ſin is removed, that is, our obligation to eternal puniſhment.

And then for attaining ſalvation. CHRIST having in the goſpel revealed to us the way and means to eternal happineſs, it is neceſſary that we ſhould believe this revelation of the goſpel by JESUS CHRIST,

in

SERM. CLIX.

in order to this end. So that you ſee the neceſſity of faith and repentance, becauſe without theſe we can neither eſcape miſery, nor attain to happineſs.

I ſhould now come to draw ſome inferences from this diſcourſe, but I will firſt give ſatisfaction to a query or two, to which this diſcourſe ſeems to have given occaſion.

1. Query. You will ſay, why do I call repentance a doctrine of the goſpel? It is a doctrine of nature. Natural religion tells us, that when we have offended GOD, we ought to be ſorry for it, and reſolve to amend and reform.

Anſ. I do not make the doctrine of repentance proper to the goſpel, as if it had not been revealed to the world before; but becauſe it is a doctrine which the goſpel very much preſſeth and perſuadeth men to, and becauſe the great motives and enforcements of it are peculiar to the goſpel, So that the doctrine of repentance, conſidered with thoſe powerful reaſons and arguments to it which the goſpel furniſheth us withal, is in this ſenſe proper to the goſpel, and not known to the world before.

There are two motives and enforcements to repentance which the goſpel furniſheth us with.

1. Aſſurance of pardon and remiſſion of ſins in caſe of repentance, which is a great encouragement to repentance, and which, before the goſpel, the world had never any firm and clear aſſurance of.

2. Aſſurance of eternal rewards and puniſhments after this life, which is a ſtrong argument to perſuade men to change their lives, that they may avoid the miſery that is threatened to impenitent ſinners, and be qualified for the happineſs which it promiſeth to repentance and obedience. And this the apoſtle tells us in the formentioned place, Acts xvii. 30, 31.

30, 31. is that which doth, as it were, make repentance to be a new doctrine that did come with the goſpel into the world, becauſe it was never before enforced with this powerful argument; "the times "of that ignorance GOD winked at; but now he "calls upon all men every where to repent; be- "cauſe, &c." When the world was in ignorance, and had not ſuch aſſurance of a future ſtate, of eternal rewards and puniſhments after this life, the arguments to repentance were weak and feeble in compariſon of what they now are, the neceſſity of this duty was not ſo evident. But now GOD hath aſſured us of a future judgment, now exhortations to repentance have a commanding power and influence upon men; ſo that repentance, both as it is that which is very much preſſed and inculcated in the goſpel, and as it hath it's chief motives and enforcements from the goſpel, may be ſaid to be one of the great doctrines of the goſpel. SERM. CLIX.

Query 2. Whether the preaching of faith in CHRIST, among thoſe who are already Chriſtians, be at all neceſſary? Becauſe it ſeems very improper, to preſs thoſe to believe in CHRIST, who are already perſuaded that he is the Meſſias, and do entertain the hiſtory and doctrine of the goſpel.

Anſ. The faith which the apoſtle here means, and which he would perſuade men to, is an effectual belief of the goſpel; ſuch a faith as hath real effects upon men, and makes them to live as they believe; ſuch a faith as perſuades them of the need of theſe bleſſings that the goſpel offers, and makes them to deſire to be partakers of them, and in order thereto to be willing to ſubmit to thoſe terms and conditions of holineſs and obedience, which the goſpel requires. This is the faith we would perſuade men to, and

SERM. CLIX.

there is nothing more neceſſary to be preſſed upon the greateſt part of Chriſtians than this; for how few are there, among thoſe who profeſs to believe the goſpel, who believe it in this effectual manner, ſo as to conform themſelves to it? The faith which moſt Chriſtians pretend to is merely negative; they do not diſbelieve the goſpel, they do not conſider it, nor trouble themſelves about it, they do not care, nor are concerned whether it be true or not; but they have not a poſitive belief of it, they are not poſſeſſed with a firm perſuaſion of the truth of thoſe matters which are contained in it; if they were, ſuch a perſuaſion would produce real and poſitive effects. Every man naturally deſires happineſs, and it is impoſſible that any man that is poſſeſſed with this belief, that in order to happineſs it is neceſſary for him to do ſuch and ſuch things; and that if he omit or neglect them he is unavoidably miſerable, that he ſhould not do them. Men ſay they believe this or that, but you may ſee in their lives, what it is they believe. So that the preaching of this faith in CHRIST, which is the only true faith, is ſtill neceſſary.

I. Infer. "If repentance towards GOD, and faith in "the LORD JESUS CHRIST," be the ſum and ſubſtance of the goſpel, then from hence we may infer the excellency of the chriſtian religion, which inſiſts only upon thoſe things that do tend to our perfection and our happineſs. Repentance tends to our recovery, and the bringing of us back as near as may be to innocence. *Primus innocentiæ gradus eſt non peccaſſe*; *ſecundus*, *pœnitentia*: and then "faith in the LORD "JESUS CHRIST," though it be very comprehenſive, and contains many things in it, yet nothing but what is eminently for our advantage, and doth very much conduce to our happineſs. The hiſtorical part

of

of the goſpel acquaints us with the perſon and actions of our SAVIOUR, which conduceth very much to our underſtanding of the author and means of our ſalvation. The doctrinal part of the goſpel contains what GOD requires on our part, and the encouragements and arguments to our duty, from the conſideration of the recompence and rewards of the next life. The precepts of CHRIST's doctrine are ſuch as tend exceedingly to the perfection of our nature, being all founded in reaſon, in the nature of GOD, and of a reaſonable creature; I except only thoſe poſitive inſtitutions of the chriſtian religion, the two ſacraments, which are not burthenſom, and are of excellent uſe. This is the firſt.

II. We may learn from hence what is to be the ſum and end of our preaching, to bring men to repentance and a firm belief of the goſpel; but then it is to be conſidered, that we preach repentance, ſo often as we preach either againſt ſin in general, or any particular ſin or vice; and ſo often as we perſuade to holineſs in general, or to the performance of any particular duty of religion, or to the exerciſe of any particular grace; for repentance includes the forſaking of ſin, and a ſincere reſolution and endeavour of reformation and obedience. And we preach repentance ſo often as we inſiſt upon ſuch conſiderations and arguments, as may be powerful to deter men from ſin, and to engage them to holineſs. And we preach "faith towards our LORD JESUS CHRIST," ſo often as we declare the grounds of the chriſtian religion, and inſiſt upon ſuch arguments as tend to make it credible, and are proper to convince men of the truth and reaſonableneſs of it; ſo often as we explain the myſtery of CHRIST's incarnation, the hiſtory of his life, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and

SERM. CLIX.

interceſſion, and the proper ends and uſe of theſe; ſo often as we open the method of GOD's grace for the ſalvation of ſinners, the nature of the covenant between GOD and us, and the conditions of it, and the way how a ſinner is juſtified and hath his ſins pardoned, the nature and neceſſity of regeneration and ſanctification; ſo often as we explain the precepts of the goſpel, and the promiſes and threatenings of it, and endeavour to convince men of the equity of CHRIT's commands, and to aſſure them of the certainty of the eternal happineſs which the goſpel promiſes to them that obey it, and of the eternal miſery which the goſpel threatens to thoſe that are diſobedient; all this is preaching "faith in our LORD "JESUS CHRIST."

III. This may correct the irregular humours and itch in many people, who are not contented with this plain and wholeſom food, but muſt be gratified with ſublime notions and unintelligible myſteries, with pleaſant paſſages of wit, and artificial ſtrains of rhetorick, with nice and unprofitable diſputes, with bold interpretations of dark prophecies, and peremptory determinations of what will happen next year, and a punctual ſtating of the time when Anti-chriſt ſhall be thrown down, and Babylon ſhall fall, and who ſhall be employed in this work. Or if their humour lies another way, you muſt apply yourſelf to it, by making ſharp reflections upon matters in preſent controverſy and debate, you muſt dip your ſtile in gall and vinegar, and be all ſatyr and invective againſt thoſe that differ from you, and teach people to hate one another, and to fall together by the ears; and this men call goſpel preaching, and ſpeaking of ſeaſonable truths.

Surely St. Paul was a goſpel preacher, and ſuch an

SERM. CLIX.

an one as may be a pattern to all others; and yet he did none of theſe; he preached what men might underſtand, and what they ought to believe and practiſe, in a plain and unaffected and convincing manner; he taught "ſuch things as made for peace," "and whereby he might edify and build up men in "their holy faith." The doctrines that he preached will never be unſeaſonable, that men ſhould leave their ſins, and believe the goſpel, and live accordingly.

And if men muſt needs be gratified with diſputes and controverſies, there are theſe great controverſies between GOD and the ſinner to be ſtated and determined; whether this be religion, to follow our own luſts and inclinations, or to endeavour to be like GOD, and to be conformed to him, in goodneſs, and mercy, and righteouſneſs, and truth, and faithfulneſs? Whether JESUS CHRIST be not the Meſſias and SAVIOUR of the world? Whether faith and repentance and ſincere obedience be not the terms of ſalvation, and the neceſſary conditions of happineſs? Whether there ſhall be a future judgment, when all men ſhall be ſentenced according to their works? Whether there be heaven and hell? Whether good men ſhall be eternally and unſpeakably happy, and wicked men extremely and everlaſtingly miſerable? Theſe are the great controverſies of religion, upon which we are to diſpute on GOD's behalf againſt ſinners. GOD aſſerts, and ſinners deny theſe things, not in words, but which is more emphatical and ſignificant, in their lives and actions. Theſe are practical controverſies of faith, and it concerns every man to be reſolved and determined about them, that he may frame his life accordingly.

And ſo for repentance; GOD ſays, repentance is a forſaking of ſin, and a thorough change and amend-

ment

SERM. CLIX.

ment of life; the ſinner ſays, that it is only a formal confeſſion, and a ſlight aſking of GOD forgiveneſs: GOD calls upon us ſpeedily and forthwith to repent; the ſinner ſaith it is time enough, and it may ſafely be deferred to ſickneſs or death; theſe are important controverſies, and matters of moment. But men do not affect common truths; whereas theſe are moſt neceſſary: And indeed whatever is generally uſeful and beneficial, ought to be common, and not to be the leſs valued, but the more eſteemed for being ſo.

And as theſe doctrines of faith and repentance are never unſeaſonable, ſo are they more peculiarly proper when we celebrate the holy ſacrament, which was inſtituted for a ſolemn and ſtanding memorial of the chriſtian religion, and is one of the moſt powerful arguments and perſuaſives to repentance and a good life.

The faith of the goſpel doth more particularly reſpect the death of CHRIST; and therefore it is called "faith in his blood," becauſe that is more eſpecially the object of our faith; the blood of CHRIST, as it was a ſeal of the truth of his doctrine, ſo it is alſo a confirmation of all the bleſſings and benefits of the new covenant.

And it is one of the greateſt arguments in the world to repentance. In the blood of CHRIST we may ſee our own guilt, and in the dreadful ſufferings of the Son of GOD, the juſt deſert of our ſins; "he "hath born our griefs, and carried our ſorrows, he "was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed "for our iniquities; therefore the commemoration of his ſufferings ſhould call our ſins to remembrance, the repreſentation of his body broken, ſhould melt our hearts; and ſo often as we remember that "his "blood

" blood was ſhed for us, our eyes" ſhould " run " down with rivers of tears ;" ſo often as we " look " upon him whom we have pierced," we ſhould " mourn over him." When the ſon of GOD ſuffered, " the rocks were rent in ſunder ;" and ſhall not the conſideration of thoſe ſufferings be effectual to break the moſt ſtony and obdurate heart?

What can be more proper when we come to this ſacrament, than the renewing of our repentance? When we partake of this paſſover, we ſhould " eat " it with bitter herbs." The moſt ſolemn expreſſions of our repentance fall ſhort of thoſe ſufferings, which our bleſſed SAVIOUR underwent for our ſins. If " our head were waters, and our eyes fountains " of tears," we could never ſufficiently lament the curſed effects and conſequences of thoſe provocations which were ſo fatal to the Son of GOD.

And that our repentance may be real, it muſt be accompanied with the reſolution of a better life ; for if we return to our ſins again, " we trample under " foot the Son of GOD, and profane the blood of " the covenant," and out of " the cup of ſalvation " we drink our own damnation," and turn that which ſhould ſave us into an inſtrument and ſeal of our own ruin.

SER-

SERMON CLX.

Of confeſſing and forſaking ſin, in order to pardon.

PROV. xxviii. 13.

He that covereth his ſins ſhall not proſper: but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy.

SERM. CLX. Preached on Aſh-wedneſday.

SINCE we are all ſinners, and liable to the juſtice of GOD, it is a matter of great moment to our comfort and happineſs, to be rightly informed by what means, and upon what terms, we may be reconciled to GOD, and find mercy with him. And to this purpoſe the text gives us this advice and direction, "whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſins "ſhall have mercy."

In which words there is a great bleſſing and benefit declared and promiſed to ſinners, upon certain conditions. The bleſſing and benefit promiſed, is "the mercy and favour of GOD," which comprehends all the happy effects of GOD's mercy and goodneſs to ſinners. And the conditions upon which this bleſſing is promiſed are two, "confeſſion of our ſins, "and forſaking of them;" and theſe two contain in them the whole nature of that great and neceſſary duty of repentance, without which a ſinner can have no reaſonable hopes of the mercy of GOD.

I. Here is a bleſſing or benefit promiſed, which is "the mercy and favour of GOD." And this in the full extent of it, comprehends all the effects of the mercy and goodneſs of GOD to ſinners, and doth primarily import the pardon and forgiveneſs of our ſins.

And

SERM. CLX.

And this probably Solomon did chiefly intend in this expreſſion; for ſo the mercy of GOD doth moſt frequently ſignify in the old teſtament, viz. the forgiveneſs of our ſins. And thus the prophet explains it, Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forſake his ways, and "the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him "return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy, "and to our GOD, for he will abundantly pardon."

But now ſince the clear revelation of the goſpel, the mercy of GOD doth not only extend to the pardon of ſin, but to power againſt it; becauſe this alſo is an effect of GOD's free grace and mercy to ſinners, to enable them, by the grace of his holy Spirit, to maſter and mortify their luſts, and to perſevere in goodneſs to the end.

And it comprehends alſo our final pardon and abſolution at the great day, together with the glorious reward of eternal life, which the apoſtle expreſſeth, by "finding mercy with the LORD in that day." And this likewiſe is promiſed to repentance, Acts iii. 19. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, "that your ſins may be blotted out, when the times "of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the "LORD, and he ſhall ſend JESUS CHRIST, who "before was preached unto you;" that is, that when JESUS CHRIST who is now preached unto you ſhall come, you may receive the final ſentence of abſolution and forgiveneſs.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice to have ſpoken of the bleſſing and benefit here promiſed, the mercy of GOD; which comprehends all the bleſſed effects of the divine grace and goodneſs to ſinners, the preſent pardon of ſin, and power to mortify ſin, and to perſevere in a good courſe, and our final abſolution by

SERM. CLX.

the ſentence of the great day, together with the merciful and glorious reward of eternal life.

II. We will conſider in the next place, the conditions upon which this bleſſing is promiſed, and they are two, the confeſſing and forſaking of our ſins, "Whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſin, ſhall have "mercy;" and theſe two do contain and conſtitute the whole nature of repentance, without which a ſinner can have no reaſonable hopes to find mercy with GOD. I begin with the

Firſt, the confeſſion of our ſins; by which is meant a penitent acknowledgment of our faults to GOD; to GOD I ſay, becauſe the confeſſion of our ſins to men is not, generally ſpeaking, a condition of the forgiveneſs of them, but only in ſome particular caſes, when our ſins againſt GOD are accompanied and complicated with ſcandal and injury to men. In other caſes the confeſſion of our ſins to men is not neceſſary to the pardon of them; as I ſhall more fully ſhew in the progreſs of this diſcourſe.

All the difficulty in this matter is, that the confeſſion of our ſins is oppoſed to the covering and concealing of them: "he that covereth his ſin ſhall "not proſper: but whoſo confeſſeth them ſhall have "mercy." But no man can hope to hide his ſin from GOD, and therefore confeſſion of them to GOD cannot be here meant. But this objection, if it be of any force, quite excludeth confeſſion to GOD, as no part of Solomon's meaning; when yet confeſſion of our ſins to GOD is granted, on all hands, to be a neceſſary condition of the forgiveneſs of them. And to take away the whole ground of this objection; men are ſaid in ſcripture, when they do not confeſs their ſins and repent of them, to hide and conceal them from GOD: not to acknowledge them is as if

a man went about to cover them. And thus David oppoſeth confeſſion of ſins to GOD, to the hiding of them, Pſal. xxxii. 5. "I acknowledged my ſin unto "thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I ſaid I "will confeſs my tranſgreſſions unto the LORD." So that this is no reaſon, why the text ſhould not be underſtood of the confeſſing of our ſins to GOD. SERM. CLX.

But becauſe the neceſſity of confeſſing our ſins to men (that is, to the prieſt) in order to the forgiveneſs of them, is a great point of difference between us and the church of Rome, it being by them eſteemed a neceſſary article of faith, but by us, ſo far from being neceſſary to be believed, that we do not believe it to be true; therefore for the clear ſtating of this matter, I ſhall briefly enquire into theſe two things.

I. Whether confeſſion of our ſins to the prieſt, as taught and practiſed in the church of Rome, be neceſſary to the forgiveneſs of them.

II. How far the diſcloſing and revealing of our ſins to the miniſters of GOD is convenient upon other accounts, and for other purpoſes of religion.

I. Whether confeſſion of our ſins to the prieſt, and the manner in which it is taught and practiſed in the church of Rome, be neceſſary to the forgiveneſs of them. What manner of confeſſion this is, the council of Trent hath moſt preciſely determined, viz. "Secret confeſſion to the prieſt alone, of all "and every mortal ſin, which upon the moſt dili- "gent ſearch and examination of our conſciences "we can remember ourſelves to be guilty of, ſince "our baptiſm; together with all the circumſtances "of thoſe ſins, which may change the nature of "them; becauſe without the perfect knowledge of "theſe, the prieſt cannot make a judgment of the

SERM. CLX.

" nature and quality of men's ſins, nor impoſe fit-
" ting penance for them." This is the confeſſion of ſins required in the church of Rome, which the ſame council of Trent, without any real ground from ſcripture or eccleſiaſtical antiquity, doth moſt confidently affirm, " to have been inſtituted by our LORD,
" and by the law of GOD to be neceſſary to ſalvati-
" on, and to have been always practiſed in the ca-
" tholick church."

I ſhall as briefly as I can examine both theſe pretences, of the divine inſtitution, and conſtant practice of this kind of confeſſion.

Firſt, for the divine inſtitution of it, they mainly rely upon three texts; in the firſt of which there is no mention at all of confeſſion, much leſs of a particular confeſſion of all our ſins with the circumſtances of them; in the other two there is no mention of confeſſion to the prieſts: and yet all this ought clearly to appear in theſe texts, before they can ground a divine inſtitution upon them; for a divine inſtitution is not to be founded upon obſcure conſequences, but upon plain words.

The firſt text, and the only one upon which the council of Trent grounds the neceſſity of confeſſion, is, John xx. 23. " Whoſeſoever ſins ye remit, they
" are remitted; and whoſeſoever ſins ye retain, they
" are retained:" It is a ſign they were at a great loſs for a text to prove it, when they are glad to bring one that hath not one word in it concerning confeſſion, nor the leaſt intimation of the neceſſity of it.

But let us ſee how they manage it to their purpoſe. The apoſtles and their ſucceſſors (ſaith Bellarmine) by this power of remitting and retaining ſins, are conſtituted judges of the caſe of penitents; but they cannot judge without hearing the cauſe, and this

this infers particular confeſſion of ſins to the prieſt, from whence he concludes it neceſſary to the forgiveneſs of ſins.

But do not the miniſters of the goſpel exerciſe this power of remitting ſins in baptiſm? And yet particular confeſſion of all ſins to the prieſt is not required, no not in the church of Rome, in the baptiſm of adult perſons. And therefore according to them, particular confeſſion of ſin to the prieſt is not neceſſary to his exerciſing the power of remitting ſins, and conſequently the neceſſity of confeſſion cannot be concluded from this text.

And to ſhew how they are puzzled in this matter, Vaſquez by a ſtrange device concludes the neceſſity of confeſſion from the power of retaining ſins; for (ſays he) if the prieſt have a power of retaining ſins, that is of denying pardon and abſolution to the penitent, then he may impoſe confeſſion as a condition of forgiveneſs, and not abſolve the penitent upon other terms. But ſuppoſing the prieſt to have this unreaſonable power, this makes confeſſion no otherwiſe neceſſary by divine inſtitution, than going to Jeruſalem or China is, in order to the forgiveneſs of our ſins, or ſubmitting to any other fooliſh condition, that the prieſt thinks fit to require; for according to this way of reaſoning, this power of retaining ſins makes every fooliſh thing, that the prieſt ſhall impoſe upon the penitent, to be neceſſary by divine command and inſtitution.

But the truth is, this power of remitting and retaining ſins is exerciſed by the miniſters of the goſpel, in the adminiſtration of the ſacraments, and the preaching of the goſpel, which is called "the word "of reconciliation, the miniſtry whereof is commit-"ted to them." And thus the ancient fathers underſtood

SERM. CLX.

derſtood it; and as a great divine told them in the council of Trent, it was perhaps never expounded by any one father concerning the buſineſs of confeſſion.

The ſecond text they alledge to this purpoſe is 1 John i. 9. "If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful "and juſt to forgive us our ſins." Here indeed is confeſſion; but general, not particular, as appears by the oppoſition, "If we ſay that we have no ſin, "we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us: "but if we confeſs our ſins," that is, if we acknowledge our ſelves to have been ſinners. And then there is not a word of confeſſing to the prieſt; the confeſſion here meant is plainly to GOD, becauſe it follows, "he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our "ſins," that is GOD, who is neceſſarily underſtood in the former part of the ſentence; as if it had run thus, "if we confeſs our ſins to GOD, he is faithful "and juſt to forgive us our ſins."

The third text is, Jam v. 16. "Confeſs your "faults one to another, and pray one for another." And here again there is only mention of confeſſion, but not a word of the prieſt: and for another reaſon, if I had been to adviſe them, they ſhould not have preſt this text for their ſervice in this cauſe, becauſe it does them as much hurt as good; for it is certain, the duty of confeſſion here enjoined is reciprocal and mutual, "confeſs your ſins one to another:" ſo that if by virtue of this text the people are bound to confeſs their ſins to the prieſt, the prieſt is hereby as much obliged to confeſs his ſins to the people; which I dare ſay is more than they have a mind to prove from this text. The plain meaning whereof is this, that as Chriſtians ſhould be ready to perform all mutual offices of charity, ſo to aſſiſt and comfort one another,

another by their counſel and prayers. And therefore the apoſtle adviſeth Chriſtians when they are ſick, if at the ſame time they be under any ſpiritual trouble, by reaſon of the guilt of any ſin lying upon their conſciences, to lay open their caſe to one another, that ſo they may have the help of one anothers advice and prayers; "confeſs your faults one "to another, and pray one for another, that ye "may be healed," both of your bodily and ſpiritual diſtemper. Not that the prieſt or miniſter is here excluded; St. James had ſpoken of that particular before, that when "any was ſick," he ſhould "ſend "for the elders of the church," that he might in the firſt place have the benefit of their counſel and prayers; and then becauſe private Chriſtians may alſo be uſeful to one another in this kind, he adds, that they ſhould alſo lay open their condition and troubles "to one another," that ſo they might have the help of one anothers advice and prayers; and very probably all the confeſſion here meant of private Chriſtians to one another, is of the offences and injuries they may have been guilty of, one towards another; that they ſhould be reconciled upon this occaſion, and as a teſtimony of their charity, ſhould "pray one for another;" whereas they are bound "to ſend for the elders of the church," and they are "to pray over them," as an act not only of charity, but of ſuperiority, and by virtue of their office in the church, a more eſpecial bleſſing being to be expected from their prayers.

Theſe three texts are the main arguments from ſcripture, which they of the church of Rome bring to prove their auricular or ſecret confeſſion to be of divine inſtitution; and woful proofs they are: which ſhews what miſerable ſhifts they are reduced to, who reſolve to maintain a bad cauſe. I pro-

I proceed in the ſecond place, to diſcover the falſhood of their other pretences, that this kind of confeſſion hath always been practiſed in the catholick church; and not only ſo, but believed abſolutely neceſſary to the remiſſion of mens ſins, and their eternal ſalvation.

The truth of the whole matter is this: publick confeſſion and penance for open and ſcandalous crimes was in uſe, and with great ſtrictneſs obſerved in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity; and there was then no general law or cuſtom, that exacted ſecret confeſſion of ſins to the prieſt, as a neceſſary part of repentance, and condition of forgiveneſs: afterward publick penance was by degrees diſuſed, which plainly ſhews, that, in the opinion of the church, this diſcipline, how uſeful ſoever, was not of abſolute neceſſity to reſtore men to the favour of GOD.

In place of this came in private confeſſion to the prieſt, particularly appointed to this office, and called the penitentiary; but upon occaſion of a ſcandal that happened, this alſo was abrogated by Nectarius biſhop of Conſtantinople; which ſhews that neither was this neceſſary. And this act of Nectarius was juſtified by his ſucceſſor St. Chryſoſtom, who does over and over moſt expreſly teach, that confeſſion of our ſins to men is not neceſſary to the forgiveneſs of them, but that it is ſufficient to confeſs them to GOD alone; ſo that St. Chryſoſtom does plainly ſtand condemned by the decrees of the council of Trent.

And thus for ſeveral ages the matter reſted, till the degeneracy of the church of Rome growing towards it's height, about the IX. and X. centuries, ſome began to contend for the neceſſity of ſecret confeſſion; and this in the year 1215. in the IV. council of Lateran under Pope Innocent III. was decreed and eſtabliſhed.

And

And this is the first publick law that was made in the christian church concerning this matter, notwithstanding all the boasts of the council of Trent, about the antiquity of this institution and practice; for Gratian, who lived about fifty years before this council, tells us, that in his time several wise and religious men were of the contrary opinion, and did not hold confession necessary by virtue of any divine law. Afterwards in the council of Florence, and especially in that of Trent, this decree of the council of Lateran was confirmed and enlarged in many particulars, of which I have already given some account.

And whereas they pretend for themselves the universal practice not only of the past, but present church, we are able to shew from clear testimony of their own writers, that confession, as taught and practised in the church of Rome, is no where else in use at this day, neither among the Abyssines, nor Indians of St. Thomas, nor the Nestorians, nor the Armenians, nor the Jacobites, churches of great antiquity and vast extent. And as for the Greek church, if we may believe Gratian, and the author of the gloss upon the canon law, the Greeks had anciently no tradition concerning the necessity of confession, nor do they at this day agree with the Roman church in all points concerning it.

So that, in short, there is no nation nor church throughout the whole world, that bears the name of christian, the Roman church only excepted, that doth fully embrace and maintain the whole doctrine of the council of Trent, concerning confession; and yet, according to their principles, the whole is of equal necessity to be believed, as any part of it. With what face then do they declare, that this manner of con-

feſſion always was, and ſtill is obſerved in the catholick, that is, in the whole chriſtian church?

I have not time to ſhew the great and manifold inconveniencies and miſchiefs of this practice: how infinite a torture it is to the conſciences of men, by entangling them in endleſs doubts and ſcruples; and how great a ſcandal it is to the chriſtian profeſſion, in the lewd management of it by the prieſts, is evident from the two bulls of pope Pius IV. and Gregory XV. which mention things too ſhameful to be declared; not to inſiſt upon other horrible abuſes of it to the vileſt and wickedeſt purpoſes; not ſo much to direct the conſciences of men, as to dive into their ſecrets, of which there are ſo many plain and notorious inſtances, that they are paſt denial.

The other thing pretended for it is, that it is a great reſtraint upon men from ſin. And very probably it is ſo, to modeſt and well diſpoſed perſons: but experience ſhews how quite contrary an effect it hath upon others, who are the far greateſt part of mankind. Does not all the world ſee in the popiſh countries, in the time of their carnival, juſt before Lent, the anniverſary ſeaſon of confeſſion, how ſcandalous a liberty men take of doing lewd and wicked things; and that for this very reaſon, becauſe their conſciences are preſently to be eaſed and ſcoured (as they call it) by confeſſion and abſolution? And they therefore take the opportunity to gratify their luſts, and fill up the meaſure of their iniquity at that time; becauſe with one labour they can ſet their conſciences right, and clear them of all guilt. And they look upon this as a ſpecial piece of ſpiritual good huſbandry, to quit their ſcores with GOD at once, that ſo they may have no occaſion to trouble him, nor the prieſt, nor themſelves again for a good while after.

So

So that confeſſion, inſtead of being a reſtraint from ſin, gives great encouragement to it, by deluding men into a vain hope of obtaining the pardon of their ſins from time to time, though they ſtill continue in the practice of them; by which device, mens ſins are at once remitted and retained; the prieſt remits them by abſolution, and the penitent retains them, by going on ſtill in the commiſſion of them, in hope of obtaining a new abſolution as often as occaſion ſhall require. I proceed to the

IId Enquiry, namely, how far the diſcloſing and revealing our ſins to the miniſters of GOD, may be convenient upon other accounts, and to other purpoſes of religion? To which the anſwer is very plain and ſhort; ſo far as is neceſſary either to the direction, or the eaſe of mens conſciences.

There are many caſes wherein men, under the guilt and trouble of their ſins, can neither appeaſe their own minds, nor ſufficiently direct themſelves, without recourſe to ſome pious and prudent guide; in theſe caſes, men certainly do very well, and many times prevent a great deal of trouble and perplexity to themſelves, by a timely diſcovery of their condition to ſome faithful miniſter, in order to their direction and ſatisfaction, without which they ſhall never perhaps be able to clear themſelves of the obſcurity and entanglement of their own minds, but by ſmothering their trouble in their own breaſts, ſhall proceed from one degree of melancholy to another, till at laſt they be plunged either into diſtraction or deſpair; whereas the diſcovery of their condition in time, would prove a preſent and effectual remedy. And to this purpoſe, a general confeſſion is for the moſt part ſufficient; and where there is occaſion for a more particular diſcovery, there is no

need of raking into the particular and foul circumſtances of mens ſins, to give that advice which is neceſſary for the cure and eaſe of the penitent; a thing ſo far from being deſirable, that it muſt needs be very grievous to every modeſt and good man.

And thus far confeſſion is not only allowed, but encouraged among proteſtants. In the Lutheran churches, Chemnitius tells us, that private general confeſſion is in uſe and practice. And Calvin freely declares, that he is ſo far from being againſt peoples repairing to their paſtors to this purpoſe, that he earneſtly wiſheth it were every where obſerved before the receiving of the ſacrament. And the ſame is the ſenſe of our own church, laying no neceſſity upon men in this matter, but adviſing, eſpecially before the ſacrament, thoſe who have any trouble upon their conſciences, to repair to ſome diſcreet and faithful miniſter of GOD's word, for advice and ſatisfaction. And thus all the good uſe, which can be made of confeſſion, may be had in our church, without the ill effects and conſequences of the Romiſh confeſſion, and without laying a yoke upon the conſciences of men, which our SAVIOUR never laid.

And now I have, as briefly and as plainly as I could, ſtated this controverſy between us and the church of Rome, concerning the neceſſity and uſe of ſecret confeſſion to the miniſters of GOD, as the proper guides and directors of our conſciences. But it is granted on all hands, that confeſſion of our ſins to GOD is neceſſary; and there is no doubt but it is here intended in the text, viz. a penitent acknowledgment of our ſins; the nature whereof I ſhall briefly explain to you.

And it muſt not only be a general confeſſion that we are ſinners; but there muſt be a particular acknowledgment

ledgment of our ſins to GOD, ſo far as upon a particular diſcuſſion and examination of our conſciences, we can call them to remembrance; eſpecially our moſt heinous ſins, which our conſciences will not ſuffer us to forget, muſt be particularly acknowledged, with the ſeveral aggravations of them.

And this confeſſion muſt be accompanied with ſuch a ſhame and ſorrow for our ſins, as produceth in us a ſincere reſolution to leave them, and to betake ourſelves to a better courſe. Theſe are the principal ingredients of a penitent confeſſion.

1. There muſt be a ſhame, without which there is no hope of amendment. Confeſſion always ſuppoſeth conviction of a fault; and he that is truly convinced that he hath done amiſs, cannot but be aſhamed of what he hath done. And thus the penitents in ſcripture were wont to make confeſſion of their ſins to GOD; Ezra ix. 6. "O my GOD, ſays he, I am "aſhamed, and bluſh to lift up my face to thee my "GOD." So Jeremiah, ch. iii. 25. "We lie down "in our ſhame, and our confuſion covereth us; "for we have ſinned againſt the LORD." And ſo likewiſe Daniel, chap. ix. 5. "We have ſinned, "and have committed iniquity, and done wickedly; unto us belongeth confuſion of face." And thus our SAVIOUR deſcribes the penitent behaviour of the publican, as aſhamed to look up to that GOD whom he had offended, Luke xviii. 13. "He "would not lift up ſo much as his eyes to heaven; "but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, GOD be merciful to me a ſinner."

2. Confeſſion muſt be always accompanied with great ſorrow for our ſins, conſidering the great diſhonour we have brought to GOD, and the danger into which we have brought ourſelves; "I will

"declare

SERM. CLX.

" declare mine iniquity, ſays David, and I will be " ſorry for my ſin."

And this ſorrow muſt be proportionable to the degree of our ſin. If we have been very wicked, and have ſinned greatly againſt the LORD, and " have multiplied our tranſgreſſions" and continued long in an evil courſe, have neglected GOD, and " forgotten him days without number," the meaſure of our ſorrow muſt bear ſome proportion to the degree of our ſins: if they have been " as ſcarlet " and crimſon," (as the prophet expreſſeth it) that is, of a deeper dye than ordinary, our ſorrow muſt be as deep as our guilt; for it is not a ſlight trouble and a few tears that will waſh out ſuch ſtains.

Not that tears are abſolutely neceſſary, though they do very well become, and moſt commonly accompany a ſincere repentance. All tempers are not in this alike; ſome cannot expreſs their ſorrow by tears, even then when they are moſt inwardly and ſenſibly grieved. But if we can eaſily ſhed tears upon other occaſions; certainly " rivers of tears" ought to " run down our eyes," becauſe we have broken GOD's laws, the reaſonable, and righteous, and good laws of ſo good a GOD, of ſo gracious a ſovereign, of ſo mighty a benefactor, of the founder of our being, and the perpetual patron and protector of our lives: but if we cannot command our tears, there muſt however be great trouble and contrition of ſpirit, eſpecially for great ſins; to be ſure to that degree as to produce the

3. Property I mentioned of a penitent confeſſion, namely, a ſincere reſolution to leave our ſins, and betake ourſelves to a better courſe. He does not confeſs his fault, but ſtand in it, who is not reſolved to amend. True ſhame and ſorrow for our ſins is utterly

utterly inconſiſtent with any thought of returning to them. It argues great obſtinacy and impudence to confeſs a fault and continue in it. Whenever we make confeſſion of our ſins to GOD, "ſurely it is "meet to ſay unto him, I will not offend any more; "that which I know not, teach thou me; and if I "have done iniquity, I will do no more."

This is the firſt part of repentance mentioned in the text, the firſt condition of our finding mercy with GOD, the penitent acknowledgment of our ſins to him. I proceed to the

Second condition required to make us capable of the mercy of GOD, which is the actual forſaking of our ſins; "whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them "ſhall have mercy." I ſhall not go about to explain what is meant by "forſaking ſin," it is that which every body can underſtand, but few will do; there lies all the difficulty. I ſhall only put you in mind, that forſaking of ſin comprehends our return to our duty, that neceſſarily follows from it. In ſins of commiſſion, he that hath left any vice, does thereby become maſter of the contrary virtue. *Virtus eſt vitium fugere*; not to be drunk, is to be ſober; not to oppreſs, or defraud, or deal falſly, is to be juſt and honeſt: and for ſins of omiſſion, the forſaking of them is nothing elſe, but the doing of thoſe duties which we omitted and neglected before. And therefore what Solomon here calls "forſaking of "ſin," is elſewhere in ſcripture more fully expreſſed, by "ceaſing to do evil, and learning to do "well," Iſa. i. 16. By forſaking our ſins, and turning to GOD; Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the whicked man "forſake his ways, and the unrighteous man his "thoughts, and let him return unto the LORD." By turning from all our ſins, and keeping all GOD's

SERM. CLX.

laws and ſtatutes; Ezek. xviii. 21. "If the wicked "will turn from all his ſins which he hath commit- "ted, and keep all my ſtatutes, and do that which "is lawful and right."

And this is a moſt eſſential part of repentance, and a neceſſary condition of our finding mercy with GOD. That part of repentance which I have mentioned and inſiſted upon before, the penitent acknowledgment of our ſins to GOD, with ſhame and ſorrow for them, and a firm purpoſe and reſolution to leave them; all this is but preparatory to the actual forſaking of them: that which perfects and completes repentance, is "to turn from our evilways," and "to break off our ſins by righteouſneſs."

And theſe terms of confeſſing and forſaking our ſins, are reaſonable in themſelves, and honourable to GOD, and profitable to us; and upon lower terms we have no reaſon to expect the mercy of GOD, nor in truth are we capable of it, either by the preſent forgiveneſs of our ſins, or the final abſolution of the great day, and the bleſſed reward of eternal life. GOD peremptorily requires this change as a condition of our forgiveneſs and happineſs; "re- "pent and be converted, that your ſins may be "blotted out," Acts iii. 19. "If thou wilt enter "into life, keep the commandments," Matth. xix. 17. "Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the LORD," Heb. xii. 14. And why ſhould any man hope for the mercy of GOD upon other terms than thoſe which he hath ſo plainly and peremptorily declared?

It is a mean and unworthy thought of GOD, to imagine that he will accept men to his favour and eternal life upon other terms than of better obedience. Will any wiſe father or prince accept leſs from his children and ſubjects? Will they be ſatisfied with

ſighs

ſighs and tears, as well as with obedience? And well pleaſed if they be but melancholy for their faults, though they never mend them? We muſt not impute that to GOD, which would be a defect of wiſdom and good government in any father or prince upon earth. GOD values no part of repentance upon any other account, but as it tends to reclaim us to our duty, and ends in our reformation and amendment.

This is that which qualifies us for the happineſs of another life, and "makes us meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light." And without this, though GOD ſhould be pleaſed to forgive us, yet we could not forgive ourſelves; and notwithſtanding the legal diſcharge from guilt, the ſting of it would remain, and we ſhould, like our firſt parents after they had ſinned, run away and hide ourſelves from GOD, though he ſpake never ſo kindly to us. GOD hath placed in every man's mind an inexorable judge, that will grant no pardon and forgiveneſs but to a reformed penitent, to him that hath ſuch a ſenſe of the evil of his paſt life, as to become a better man for the future.

And whoever entertains any other notion of the grace and mercy of GOD to ſinners, confounds the nature of things, and does plainly overthrow the reaſon of all laws, which is to reſtrain men from ſin: but when it is committed, to pardon it without amendment, is to encourage the practice of it, and to take away the reverence and veneration of thoſe laws, which ſeem ſo ſeverely to forbid it. So that next to impunity, the forgiveneſs of mens ſins upon ſuch eaſy and unfit terms gives boldneſs and encouragement to ſin, and muſt neceſſarily in the opinion of men leſſen the honour and eſteem of GOD's laws.

2.

And thus I have conſidered and explained both the bleſſing and benefit which is here promiſed and declared, viz. "the mercy and favour of GOD," which comprehends both the preſent forgiveneſs of our ſins, and power againſt them, and grace to perſevere in goodneſs to the end, and our final abſolution at the great day, and the glorious and merciful reward of eternal life: and likewiſe the conditions upon which this bleſſing is promiſed, viz. the penitent acknowledgment of our ſins to GOD, with ſuch ſhame and ſorrow for them, as produceth a ſincere reſolution of leaving them, and returning to a better courſe, and the actual forſaking of them, which involves in it our actual return to our duty, and a conſtant and ſincere obedience to the laws of GOD in the future courſe of our lives.

I ſhall now make ſome application of this diſcourſe to ourſelves. I am ſure we are all nearly concerned in it. The beſt of us have many ſins to confeſs and forſake; ſome of us very probably have need to change the whole courſe of our lives, to put us into a capacity of the mercy of GOD. This work can never be unſeaſonable; but there cannot be a more proper time for it, than when we are ſolemnly preparing ourſelves to receive the holy ſacrament; in which as we do commemorate the great mercy of GOD to mankind, ſo we do likewiſe renew and confirm our covenant with him, that holy covenant wherein we engage ourſelves to forſake our ſins, as ever we expect the forgiveneſs of them at GOD's hand.

To perſuade us hereto, be pleaſed to conſider the reaſonableneſs of the thing, the infinite benefit and advantage of it; and which is beyond all other arguments, the abſolute neceſſity of it, to make us capable

capable of the mercy and forgiveneſs of GOD, in this world and the other, and "to deliver us from "the wrath which is to come," and from thoſe terrible ſtorms of vengeance, which will infallibly fall upon impenitent ſinners: ſo that we have all the reaſon and all the encouragement in the world, to reſolve upon a better courſe. Upon this condition, the mercy of GOD is ready to meet and embrace us, GOD will pardon our greateſt provocations, and be perfectly reconciled to us. So he hath declared by the prophet, Iſaiah i. 16. "Waſh ye, make you clean, "put away the evil of your doings from before "mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well. "Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the "LORD; though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be "as white as ſnow; though they be red as crimſon, "they ſhall be as wool." And what greater encouragement can we deſire, than that upon ſo eaſy and advantageous terms, GOD ſhould be ſo ready to have an end put to all controverſies and quarrels between him and us?

"I beſeech you therefore, brethren, by the mer-"cies of GOD," to take up a ſerious reſolution "to "break off your ſins by repentance," and to reform whatever, upon due ſearch and trial of your ways, you ſhall find to be amiſs in your lives.

"I beſeech you by the mercies of GOD," that mercy which naturally "leads to repentance," and which is "long-ſuffering to us-ward," on purpoſe "that "we may not periſh, but come to repentance;" which hath ſpared us ſo often, and is not yet exhauſted and tired out by our intolerable obſtinacy, and innumerable provocations; that mercy which moved the Son of GOD to become man, to live among us, and to die for us; who now as it were ſpeaks to us

from the croſs, extending his pierced hands, and painful arms to embrace us, and through the gaſping wounds of his ſide let us ſee the tender and bleeding compaſſion of his heart; that mercy which if we now deſpiſe it, we ſhall in vain one day implore, and catch hold of, and hang upon, to ſave us from ſinking into eternal perdition; that mercy, which how much ſoever we now preſume upon, will then be ſo far from interpoſing between us and the wrath of GOD, that it will highly inflame and exaſperate it: for whatever impenitent ſinners may now think, they will then certainly find that the divine juſtice, when it is throughly provoked, and whetted by his abuſed mercy and goodneſs, will be moſt terribly ſevere, and like a razor ſet with oil, will cut the keener for it's ſmoothneſs.

"Conſider this all ye that forget GOD, leſt he "tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: "conſider and ſhew yourſelves men, O ye tranſ-"greſſors!"

We do conſider all this (may ſome perhaps ſay) but we have been great ſinners, ſo great, that we doubt whether our caſe be not already deſperate.

This, if it be ſenſibly ſaid, with deep ſorrow and contrition, with that ſhame and confuſion of face, which becomes great offenders, is a good confeſſion, and the beſt reaſon in the world, why ye ſhould now "break off your ſins:" for if what you have already done, do really make your caſe ſo doubtful and difficult; do not by ſinning yet more and more againſt the LORD, make it quite deſperate and paſt remedy; do but you repent, and GOD will yet "re-"turn and have mercy upon you." And do not ſay you cannot do it, when it muſt be done, or you are undone. Power and neceſſity go together: when

men are hard preſſed they find a power which they thought they had not; and when it comes to the puſh, men can do that which they plainly ſee they either muſt do, or be ruined for ever.

But after all this, I am very ſenſible how great a need there is of GOD's powerful aſſiſtance in this caſe, and that it is not an ordinary reſolution, and common meaſure of GOD's grace, that will reclaim thoſe who have been long habituated to an evil courſe.

Let us therefore earneſtly beg of him, that he would make theſe counſels effectual, that he would "grant us repentance unto life," that he would make us all ſenſible of our faults, ſorry for them, and reſolved to amend them; and let us every one put up David's prayer to GOD for ourſelves, "deal "with thy ſervant according to thy mercy, and "teach me thy ſtatutes; order my ſteps in thy "word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over "me; teach me, O LORD, the way of thy ſtatutes, "that I may keep them unto the end."

I have now done; I am only to mind you of another duty, which is to accompany our repentance, and faſting, and prayer, as a teſtimony of the ſincerity of our repentance, and one of the beſt means to make our faſting and prayer acceptable to GOD, and to turn away his judgments from us, and that is charity and alms to the poor, whoſe number is very great among us, and their neceſſities very preſſing and clamorous, and therefore do call for a bountiful ſupply.

And to convince men of the neceſſity of this duty, and the efficacy of it in conjunction with our repentance and faſting, and prayers, I ſhall only offer to your conſideration a few plain texts of ſcripture, which

SERM. CLX.

which need no comment upon them. Dan. iv. 27. It is the prophet's advice to Nebuchadnezzar; "Break off thy ſins by righteouſneſs, and thine iniquity by ſhewing mercy to the poor; if ſo be it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity. Acts x. 4. the angel there tells Cornelius, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before GOD." Iſa. lviii. 5. "Is not this the faſt which I have choſen, to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burthens, and to let the oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are caſt out, to thy houſe; when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyſelf from thy own fleſh? Then ſhall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health ſhall ſpring forth ſpeedily, and thy righteouſneſs ſhall go before thee, and the glory of the LORD ſhall be thy reward: then ſhalt thou call, and the LORD ſhall anſwer thee; thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay, here I am." To which I will only add that gracious promiſe of our SAVIOUR; "bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall find mercy;" and that terrible ſentence in St. James, "He ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy."

SER-

SERMON CLXI.

Of confeſſion, and ſorrow for ſin.

PSAL. xxxviii. 18.

I will declare mine iniquity, and be ſorry for my ſin.

SERM. CLXI.

IN this pſalm David does earneſtly beg mercy and forgiveneſs of GOD, and in order to the obtaining of it, he declares both his ſins, and his repentance for them in theſe words, which contain in them two of the neceſſary ingredients, or at leaſt concomitants of a true repentance, viz. confeſſion of ſin, and ſorrow for it.

I ſhall ſpeak ſomething of the firſt of theſe, viz. confeſſion of ſin: but the ſecond, viz. ſorrow for ſin, ſhall be the main ſubject of my diſcourſe.

I. Confeſſion of ſin; "I will declare mine iniquity," or as it is in the old tranſlation, "I will confeſs my wickedneſs." Of which I ſhall ſpeak under theſe three heads.

I. What confeſſion of ſin is.

II. How far it is neceſſary.

III. What are the reaſons and grounds of this neceſſity.

I. What confeſſion of ſin is. It is a declaration or acknowledgment of ſome moral evil or fault to another, which we are conſcious to ourſelves we have been guilty of. And this acknowledgment may be made by us, either to GOD or man. The ſcripture mentions both. Confeſſion of our ſins to GOD is very frequently mentioned in ſcripture, as the firſt and neceſſary part of repentance; and ſometimes,

SERM. CLXI.

times, and in ſome caſes, confeſſion to men is not only recommended, but enjoined.

II. How far confeſſion of our ſins is neceſſary. That it is neceſſary to confeſs our ſins to GOD, the ſcripture plainly declares, and is I think a matter out of all diſpute. For it is a neceſſary part of repentance, that we ſhould confeſs our ſins to GOD, with a due ſenſe of the evil of them; and therefore the ſcripture maketh this a neceſſary qualification, and condition of pardon and forgiveneſs. Prov. xxviii. 13. "Whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſins, ſhall "have mercy." 1 John i. 9. "If we confeſs our "ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, "and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs;" implying that if we do not confeſs our ſins to GOD, the guilt of them will ſtill remain; to GOD I ſay, for of confeſſion to him St. John plainly ſpeaks, when he ſays, "He is faithful and juſt;" Who? GOD ſurely; who though he be not named before, yet is neceſſarily underſtood in the words before; "If we "confeſs our ſins," i. e. to GOD, "he is faithful "and juſt."

A general confeſſion of our ſins is abſolutely neceſſary; and in ſome caſes a particular acknowledgment of them, and repentance for them, eſpecially if the ſins have been great and deliberate and preſumptuous; in this caſe a particular confeſſion of them, and repentance for them, is neceſſary ſo far as we can particularly recollect them, and call them to remembrance: whereas for ſins of ignorance and infirmity, of ſurprize and daily incurſion, for leſſer omiſſions, and the defects and imperfections of our beſt actions and ſervices, we have all the reaſon that can be to believe, that GOD will accept of a general confeſſion of them, and repentance for them. And

if

if any man aſk me, where I find this diſtinction in ſcripture, between a general and particular repentance; I anſwer, that it is not neceſſary it ſhould be any where expreſſed in ſcripture, being ſo clearly founded in the nature and reaſon of the thing; becauſe in many caſes it is not poſſible that we ſhould have a particular knowledge and remembrance of all our particular ſins; as is plain in ſins of ignorance, ſince our very calling them by that name does neceſſarily ſuppoſe that we do not know them. It is impoſſible we ſhould remember thoſe ſins afterwards, which we did not know when they were committed: and therefore either a general repentance for theſe, and the other ſins I mentioned of the like nature, muſt be ſufficient, in order to the pardon of them; or we muſt ſay, that they are unpardonable, which would be very unreaſonable, becauſe this would be to make leſſer ſins more unpardonable than thoſe which are far greater.

And yet though this difference between a general and particular repentance be no where expreſly mentioned in ſcripture, there does not want foundation for it there. Pſal. xix. 12. "Who can underſtand his "errors? Cleanſe thou me from ſecret ſins," (i. e.) ſuch as we do not diſcern and take notice of, when they are committed: and yet David ſuppoſeth, that upon a general acknowledgment of them, and repentance for them, we may be cleanſed from them; though we cannot make a particular acknowledgment of them, and exerciſe a particular repentance for them, becauſe they are ſecret, and we do not particularly underſtand what they are.

As for our confeſſing our ſins to men, both ſcripture and reaſon do in ſome caſes recommend and enjoin it. As,

2

1. In order to the obtaining of the prayers of good men for us. James v. 16. "Confess your sins "one to another;" he said before, "the prayer of "faith shall save the sick, and the LORD shall raise "him up." This in all probability is meant of the miraculous power of prayer, which St. Chrysostom reckons among the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, bestowed upon Christians in the first ages of the church: and this is very much countenanced and confirmed by what presently follows after this command of "confessing our sins one to another, and praying "one for another," and given as the reason of it; "for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous "man availeth much," the original is δέησις ἐνεργουμένη, the inspired prayer, which, in the verse before, is called "the prayer of faith," meaning that miraculous faith, in the power whereof Christians did obtain of GOD whatever they were inspired to ask of him; according to our SAVIOUR's promise in the gospel, concerning the efficacy of the prayers of Christians, which we find mentioned among the other miraculous powers, which were to be conferred upon them by the coming of the Holy Ghost.

2. Confession of our sins to men is likewise reasonable, in order to the ease and satisfaction of our minds, and our being directed in our duty for the future. In this case common reason and prudence, without any precept of scripture, will direct men to have recourse to this remedy, viz. to discover and lay open our disease to some skilful spiritual physician, to some faithful friend or prudent guide, in order to spiritual advice and direction, for the peace and satisfaction of our minds. And then,

3. In case our sins have been publick and scandalous, both reason and the practice of the christian

church do require, that when men have publickly offended, they ſhould give publick ſatisfaction, and open teſtimony of their repentance.

But as for private and auricular confeſſion of our ſins to a prieſt in all caſes, and as of abſolute neceſſity to our obtaining pardon and forgiveneſs from GOD, as the church of Rome teacheth, this is neither neceſſary by divine precept, nor by any conſtitution and practice of the ancient chriſtian church, as I have ſhewn in my former diſcourſe.

Not to mention the bad conſequence of this practice, and the impious and dangerous uſe which hath been made of this ſeal of confeſſion, for the concealing and carrying on of the moſt wicked and barbarous deſigns; and the debauching of the penitents, by drawing them into the commiſſion of the ſame and greater ſins, than thoſe which they confeſſed, which the more devout perſons of that church have frequently complained of. I proceed now to ſhew briefly in the

IIId Place, the grounds and reaſons of the neceſſity of confeſſing our ſins to GOD; and I ſhall but juſt mention them.

1. From the precept and command of GOD; for which I have already produced clear proof of ſcripture.

2. From the nature of the thing, becauſe without this there can be no repentance towards GOD. He that will not ſo much as own the faults which he hath been guilty of, can never repent of them. If we will not confeſs our ſins to GOD, we are never like to be ſorry for them. Thus much for the firſt thing in the text, the confeſſion of our ſins. I proceed now to the

Second ingredient of repentance mentioned in the text, which is ſorrow for ſin; "I will declare mine

SERM. CLXI.

" iniquity, and be ſorry for my ſin." In the handling of this argument, I ſhall

I. Conſider the nature of this paſſion of ſorrow.

II. The reaſon and grounds of our ſorrow for ſin.

III. The meaſure and degrees of it.

IV. How far the outward expreſſion of our inward grief by tears is neceſſary to a true repentance.

I. For the nature of this paſſion. Sorrow is a trouble or diſturbance of mind, occaſioned by ſomething that is evil, done or ſuffered by us, or which we are in danger of ſuffering, that tends greatly to our damage or miſchief: ſo that to be ſorry for a thing, is nothing elſe but to be ſenſibly affected with the conſideration of the evil of it, and of the miſchief and inconvenience which is like to redound to us from it: which if it be a moral evil, ſuch as ſin is, to be ſorry for it, is to be troubled that we have done it, and to wiſh with all our hearts that we had been wiſer, and had done otherwiſe; and if this ſorrow be true and real, if it abide and ſtay upon us, it will produce a firm purpoſe and reſolution in us, not to do the like for the future.

It is true indeed, that we are ſaid to be ſorry for the death and loſs of friends; but this is rather the effect of natural affection than of our reaſon, which always endeavours to check and moderate our grief for that which we cannot help, and labours by all means to turn our ſorrow into patience: and we are ſaid likewiſe to grieve for the miſeries and ſufferings of others; but this is not ſo properly ſorrow as pity and compaſſion. Sorrow rather reſpects ourſelves, and our own doings and ſufferings. I proceed in the

IId Place to enquire into the reaſons and grounds of our ſorrow for ſin; and they, as I have already hinted, are theſe two; the intrinſical, or the conſequent

quent evil of ſin; either the evil of ſin in itſelf, or the miſchiefs and inconveniencies which it will bring upon us. For every one that is ſorry for any fault he is guilty of, is ſo upon one of theſe two accounts; either upon the ſcore of ingenuity, or of intereſt; either becauſe he hath done a thing which is unworthy in itſelf, or becauſe he hath done ſomething which may prove prejudicial to himſelf; either out of a principle of love and gratitude to GOD, or from a principle of ſelf-love. And though the former of theſe be the better, the more generous principle of ſorrow; yet the latter is uſually the firſt; becauſe it is the more ſenſible, and toucheth us more nearly: for ſin is a baſe and ill-natured thing, and renders a man not ſo apt to be affected with the injuries he hath offered to GOD, as with the miſchief which is likely to fall upon himſelf. And therefore I will begin with the latter, becauſe it is uſually the more ſenſible cauſe of our trouble and ſorrow for ſin.

1. The great miſchief and inconvenience that ſin is like to bring upon us. When a man is thoroughly convinced of the danger into which his ſins have brought him, that they have "made him a child of "wrath," and "a ſon of perdition," that he is thereby fallen under the heavy diſpleaſure of Almighty GOD, and liable to all thoſe dreadful curſes which are written in his book, that ruin and deſtruction hang over him, and that nothing keeps him from eternal and intolerable torments, but the patience and long-ſuffering of GOD, which he does not know how ſoon it may ceaſe to interpoſe between him and the wrath of GOD, and let him fall into that endleſs and inſupportable miſery, which is the juſt portion and deſert of his ſins; he that lays to heart the ſad eſtate and condition into which he hath brought himſelf by ſin,

SERM. CLXI.

ſin, and the miſchiefs which attend him every moment of his continuance in that ſtate, and how near they are to him, and that there is but a ſtep between him and death, and hardly another between that and hell, he cannot ſurely but be very ſorry for what he hath done, and be highly diſpleaſed and offended with himſelf, that he ſhould be the author of his own ruin, and have contributed as much as in him lies to his everlaſting undoing.

2. Another and better principle of ſorrow for ſin, is ingenuity; becauſe we are ſenſible, that we have carried ourſelves very unworthily towards GOD, and have been injurious to him, who hath laid all poſſible obligations upon us: for he hath made us, and hath given us our beings, and hath charged his watchful providence with the continual care of us; his bounty hath miniſtred to the neceſſities and comforts of our life; all the bleſſings that we enjoy, are the effects of his mere love and goodneſs, without any hope of requital, or expectation of any other return from us, than of love, of gratitude, and obedience; which yet are of no advantage to him, but very beneficial and comfortable to ourſelves: for he does not expect duty and obedience from us, with any regard of benefit to himſelf, but for our ſakes, and in order to our own happineſs.

Nay, his kindneſs did not ſtop here, but after we had abuſed him by our repeated provocations, yet he ſtill continued his care of us; and when we had farther provoked him to withdraw his love, and to call in his abuſed goodneſs, and had done what lay in us to make ourſelves miſerable, he would not ſuffer us to be undone, but found out a ranſom for us, and hath contrived a way for the pardon of all our offences, and to reconcile us to himſelf, and to reſtore

us

us to happineſs, by the moſt ſtupendous and amazing condeſcenſion of love and goodneſs that ever was, even by giving his only Son to die for us.

And can we reflect upon all this, and not be ſorry and grieved at our very hearts, that we ſhould be ſo evil to him, who hath been ſo good to us; that we ſhould be ſo undutiful to ſo loving a father, ſo unkind to ſo faithful and conſtant a friend, ſo ungrateful and unworthy to ſo mighty a benefactor? If any thing will melt us into tears, ſurely this will do it, to conſider that we have ſinned againſt him, who made us, and continually preſerves us, and after all our unkindneſs to him, did ſtill retain ſo great a love for us, as to redeem us from hell and deſtruction, by the death and ſuffering of his Son, and notwithſtanding all our offences does ſtill offer us pardon and peace, life and happineſs. Such conſiderations as theſe, ſeriouſly laid to heart, ſhould, one would think, break the hardeſt heart, and make tears to guſh even out of a rock. I proceed in the

IIId Place to conſider the meaſure and degree of our ſorrow for ſin. That it admits of degrees, which ought to bear ſome proportion to the heinouſneſs of our ſins, and the ſeveral aggravations of them, and the time of our continuance in them, is out of all diſpute: for though the leaſt ſin be a juſt cauſe of the deepeſt ſorrow; yet becauſe our greateſt grief can never bear a due proportion to the vaſt and infinite evil of ſin, GOD is pleaſed to require and accept ſuch meaſures of ſorrow, as do not bear an exact correſpondence to the malignity of ſin, provided they be according to the capacity of our nature, and in ſome ſort proportioned to the degree and aggravations of our ſins; i. e. Though the higheſt degree of our ſorrow doth neceſſarily fall below the evil

of

SERM. CLXI.

of the leaſt ſin; yet GOD requires that we ſhould be more deeply affected with ſome ſins than others.

But what is the loweſt degree which GOD requires in a true penitent, and will accept, as it is impoſſible for me to tell, ſo it is unprofitable for any body to know: for no man can reaſonably make this enquiry with any other deſign, than that he may learn how he may come off with GOD upon the cheapeſt and eaſieſt terms. Now there cannot be a worſe ſign, that a man is not truly ſenſible of the great evil of ſin, than this, that he deſires to be troubled for it as little as may be, and no longer than needs muſt: and none ſurely are more unlikely to find acceptance with GOD, than thoſe who deal ſo nearly, and endeavour to drive ſo hard a bargain with him.

And therefore I ſhall only ſay this in general, concerning the degrees of our ſorrow for ſin; that ſin being ſo great an evil in itſelf, and of ſo pernicious a conſequence to us, it cannot be too much lamented and grieved for by us: and the more and greater our ſins have been, and the longer we have continued and lived in them, they call for ſo much the greater ſorrow, and deeper humiliation from us: for the reaſoning of our SAVIOUR concerning Mary Magdalene, "She loved much, becauſe much was "forgiven her," is proportionably true in this caſe, thoſe who have ſinned much, ſhould ſorrow the more.

And then we muſt take this caution along with us, that if we would judge aright of the truth of our ſorrow for ſin, we muſt not meaſure it ſo much by the degrees of ſenſible trouble and affliction, as by the rational effects of it, which are hatred of ſin, and a fixed purpoſe and reſolution againſt it for the future: for he is moſt truly ſorry for his miſcarriage, who looks upon what he hath done amiſs with abhorrence

rence and detestation of the thing, and wisheth he had not done it, and censures himself severely for it, and thereupon resolves not to do the like again. And this is the character which St. Paul gives of a godly sorrow, 2 Cor. vii. 10. that "it worketh repent-"ance," μετάνοιαν, it produceth "a real change "in our minds," and makes us to alter our purpose and resolution: and though such a person may not be so passionately and sensibly afflicted for sin, yet it appears by the effect, that he hath a deeper and more rational resentment of the evil of it, than that man who is sad and melancholy and drooping for never so long a time, and after all returns to his former sinful course; the degree of his sorrow may appear greater, but the effect of it is really less. SERM. CLXI.

IV. As for the outward expressions of our grief and sorrow. The usual sign and outward expression of sorrow is tears; but these being not the substance of our duty, but an external testimony of it, which some tempers are more unapt to than others; we are much less to judge of the truth of our sorrow for sin by these, than by our inward sensible trouble and affliction of spirit. Some persons are of a more tender and melting disposition, and can command their tears upon a little occasion, and upon very short warning; and such persons that can weep for every thing else that troubles them, have much more reason to suspect the truth of their sorrow for sin, if this outward expression of it be wanting. And we find in scripture, that the sorrow of true penitents does very frequently discover itself by this outward sign of it. Thus when Ezra and the people made confession of their sins to God, it is said, that "they wept very "sore," Ezra x. Peter when he reflected upon that great sin of denying his master, it is said, "He

SERM. CLXI.

" went forth and wept bitterly." David also was abundant in this expression of his grief. In the book of Psalms he speaks frequently of his sighs and groans, and of " watering his couch with his tears :" yea so sensibly was he affected with the evil of sin, that he could shed tears plentifully for the sins of others, Psal. cxix. 136. " Rivers of waters run down mine " eyes, because men keep not thy law." In like manner Jeremiah tells us, that " his soul did weep " in secret places, for the pride and obstinacy of the " Jews;" that " his eye did weep sore, and run " down with tears ;" Jer. xiii. 17. And so likewise St. Paul, Philip iii. 18, 19. " There are many " that walk, of whom I have told you often, and " now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies " to the cross of CHRIST." And there seems to be this natural reason for it, that all great and permanent impressions upon the mind, all deep inward resentments have usually a proportionable effect upon the body, and the inferior faculties.

But though this happen very frequently, yet it is not so constant and certain: for all men have not the same tenderness of spirit, nor are equally prone to tears; nay though a man can weep upon natural accounts, as upon the loss of a child, or near relation, or an intimate friend, or when he lies under a sharp bodily pain, yet a man may truly repent, though he cannot express his sorrow for sin the same way, provided he give testimony of it by more real effects: and therefore the rule, which is commonly given by casuists in this case, seems to be more ensnaring than true and useful: namely, " That that man that can " shed tears upon account of any evil less than that " of sin, (as certainly all natural evils are) ought " to question the truth of his repentance for any sin

" that

" that he hath committed, if he cannot ſhed tears " for it." This I think is not true, becauſe there is ſcarce any man of ſo hard and unrelenting a ſpirit, but the loſs of a kind father, or a dear child, or other near relation, will force tears from him: and yet ſuch a man, if it were to ſave his ſoul, may not be able at ſome times to ſhed a tear for his ſins. And the reaſon is obvious; becauſe tears do proceed from a ſenſitive trouble, and are commonly the product of a natural affection; and therefore it is no wonder, if they flow more readily and eaſily upon a natural account; becauſe they are the effect of a cauſe ſuitable to their nature. But ſorrow for ſin, which hath more of the judgment and underſtanding in it, hath not it's foundation in natural affection, but in reaſon; and therefore may not many times expreſs itſelf in tears, though it may produce greater and more proper effects.

So that upon the whole matter, I ſee no reaſon to call in queſtion the truth and ſincerity of that man's ſorrow and repentance, who hates ſin and forſakes it, and returns to GOD and his duty, though he cannot ſhed tears, and expreſs the bitterneſs of his ſoul for his ſin, by the ſame ſignifications that a mother doth in the loſs of her only ſon. He that cannot weep like a child may reſolve like a man, and that undoubtedly will find acceptance with GOD. A learned divine hath well illuſtrated this matter by this ſimilitude. Two perſons walking together eſpy a ſerpent, the one ſhrieks and cries out at the ſight of it, the other kills it: ſo is it in ſorrow for ſin; ſome expreſs it by great lamentation and tears, and vehement tranſports of paſſion; others by greater and more real effects of hatred and deteſtation, by forſaking their ſins, and by mortifying and ſubduing

SERM. CLXI.

their luſts: but he that kills it does certainly beſt expreſs his inward diſpleaſure and enmity againſt it.

The application I ſhall make of what hath been ſaid upon this argument, ſhall be in two particulars.

I. By way of caution, and that againſt a double miſtake about ſorrow for ſin.

1. Some look upon trouble and ſorrow for ſin, as the whole of repentance.

2. Others exact from themſelves ſuch a degree of ſorrow, as ends in melancholy, and renders them unfit both for the duties of religion, and of their particular calling. The firſt concerns almoſt the generality of men; the latter but a very few in compariſon.

1. There are a great many, who look upon trouble and ſorrow for their ſins, as the whole of repentance, whereas it is but an introduction to it. It is that which works repentance; but is not repentance itſelf. Repentance is always accompanied with ſorrow for ſin; but ſorrow for ſin does not always end in true repentance: ſorrow only reſpects ſins paſt; but repentance is chiefly preventive of ſin for the future. And GOD doth therefore require our ſorrow for ſin, in order to our forſaking of it. Heb. vi. 1. Repentance is there called "repentance from "dead works." It is not only a ſorrow for them, but a turning from them.

There is no reaſon why men ſhould be ſo willing to deceive themſelves, for they are like to be the loſers by it: but ſo we ſee it is, that many men are contented to be deceived to their own ruin; and among many other ways, which men have to cheat themſelves, this is none of the leaſt frequent, to think that if they can but ſhed a few tears for ſin upon a death-bed, which no doubt they may eaſily do, when they ſee their friends weeping about them,

and

and apprehend themſelves to be in imminent danger, not only of death, but of that which is more terrible, the heavy diſpleaſure, and the fiery indignation of Almighty GOD, "into whoſe hands it is a fearful thing to fall;" I ſay, they think that if they can but do thus much, GOD will accept this for a true repentance, and hereupon grant them pardon and eternal life. And upon theſe fond hopes, they adjourn their repentance, and the reformation of their lives to a dying hour. SERM. CLXI.

Indeed if I were to ſpeak to a man upon his death-bed, I would encourage him to a great contrition and ſorrow for his ſins, as his laſt and only remedy, and the beſt thing he can do at that time; but on the other hand, when I am ſpeaking to thoſe that are well and in health, I dare not give them the leaſt encouragement to venture their ſouls upon this, becauſe it is an hazardous, and almoſt deſperate remedy; eſpecially when men have cunningly and deſignedly contrived to rob GOD of the ſervice of their lives, and to put him off with a few unprofitable ſighs and tears at their departure out of the world. Our SAVIOUR tells us, that it is "not every one, that ſhall ſay unto him LORD! LORD! that ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and that there is a time, when "many ſhall ſeek to enter in, but ſhall not be able."

The ſum of this caution is, that men ſhould take heed of miſtaking ſorrow for ſin, for true repentance, unleſs it be followed with the forſaking of ſin and the real reformation of our lives. Ahab humbled himſelf, but we do not find that he was a true penitent. Judas was ſorry for his ſin, and yet for all that was "the ſon of perdition." Eſau is a ſad type of an ineffectual ſorrow for ſin, Heb. xii. where the

SERM. CLXI.

apoſtle tells us, that "he found no place for repen-
"tance," that is, no way to change the mind of his father Iſaac, "though he ſought it carefully with "tears." If ſorrow for ſin were repentance, there would be ſtore of penitents in hell; for there is the deepeſt and moſt intenſe ſorrow, "weeping and "wailing and gnaſhing of teeth."

2. Another miſtake which men ought to be cautioned againſt in this matter, is of thoſe who exact from themſelves ſuch a degree of ſorrow for ſin, as ends in deep melancholy, as renders them unfit both for the duties of religion, and of their particular callings. But becauſe there are but very few who fall into this miſtake, I ſhall need to ſay the leſs to it. This only I ſhall ſay, that thoſe who indulge their ſorrow to ſuch a degree, as to drown their ſpirits, and to ſink them into melancholy and mopiſhneſs, and thereby render themſelves unſerviceable to GOD, and unfit for the neceſſities of this life, they commit one ſin more to mourn for, and overthrow the end of repentance by the indiſcreet uſe of the means of it. For the end of ſorrow for ſin, is the forſaking of it, and returning to our duty: but he that ſorrows for ſin, ſo as to unfit him for his duty, defeats his own deſign, and deſtroys the end he aims at.

II. The other part of the application of this diſcourſe ſhould be, to ſtir up this affection of ſorrow in us. And here, if I had time, I might repreſent to you the great evil of ſin, and the infinite danger and inconvenience of it. If the holy men in ſcripture, David, and Jeremiah, and St. Paul, were ſo deeply affected with the ſins of others, as to ſhed rivers of tears at the remembrance of them; how ought we to be touched with the ſenſe of our own ſins, who are equally concerned in the diſhonour brought

brought to GOD by them, and infinitely more in the danger they expoſe us to! can we weep for our dead friends? And have we no ſenſe of that heavy load of guilt, of that body of death, which we carry about with us? Can we be ſad and melancholy for temporal loſſes and ſufferings, and refuſe to be comforted? And is it no trouble to us to have loſt heaven and happineſs, and to be in continual danger of the intolerable ſufferings and endleſs torments of another world?

I ſhall only offer to your conſideration, the great benefit and advantage which will redound to us from this "godly ſorrow; it worketh repentance to ſal-"vation, not to be repented of," ſaith St. Paul. If we would thus "ſow in tears," we ſhould "reap "in joy." This ſorrow would but "continue for "a time," and "in the morning" of the reſurrection there would be joy to all eternity, "joy un-"ſpeakable and full of glory." It is but a very little while, and theſe "days of mourning will be "accompliſhed;" and then "all tears ſhall be wip-"ed from our eyes; and the ranſomed of the LORD "ſhall come to Sion with ſongs, and everlaſting "joy ſhall be upon their heads. They ſhall obtain "joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall "flee away. Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they "ſhall be comforted: but wo unto you that laugh, "for ye ſhall mourn and weep." If men will rejoice in the pleaſures of ſin, and "walk in the ways "of their hearts, and in the ſight of their eyes;" if they will "remove ſorrow from their heart," and put away all ſad and melancholy thoughts from them, and are reſolved to harden their ſpirits againſt the ſenſe of ſin, againſt the checks and convictions of their own conſciences, and the ſuggeſtions of

GOD's

God's holy Spirit, againſt all the arguments that God can offer, and all the methods that God can uſe to bring them to repentance; let them "know, that for "all theſe things God will bring them into judg- "ment;" and becauſe they would not give way to a timely and ſeaſonable ſorrow for ſin, they ſhall lie down in eternal ſorrow, "weeping and wailing and "gnaſhing of teeth ſhall be their portion for ever." From which ſad and miſerable eſtate, beyond all imagination, and paſt all remedy, God of his infinite goodneſs deliver us all, for Jesus Christ's ſake.

"To whom, &c.

SERMON CLXII.

The unprofitableneſs of ſin in this life, an argument for repentance.

JOB xxxiii. 27, 28.

He looketh upon men, and if any ſay, I have ſinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his ſoul from going into the pit, and his life ſhall ſee the light.

SERM. CLXII. Preached on Aſh-wedneſday. 1689.

THE great folly and perverſeneſs of human nature is in nothing more apparent than in this, that when in all other things men are generally led and governed by their intereſts, and can hardly be impoſed upon by any art, or perſuaded by any ſolicitation, to act plainly contrary to it; yet in matter of their ſin and duty, that is, in that which of all other is of greateſt concernment to them, they have little

little or no regard to it; but are so blinded and bewitched with "the deceitfulness of sin," as not to consider the infinite danger and disadvantage of it; and at the same time to cast the commandments of GOD, and the consideration of their own happiness behind their backs.

And of this every sinner, when he comes to himself, and considers what he hath done, is abundantly convinced; as appears by the confession and acknowledgment, which is here in the text put into the mouth of a true penitent; "I have sinned, and "perverted that which was right, and it profited me "not, &c."

In which words here is a great blessing and benefit promised on GOD's part, and condition required on our part.

First, The blessing or benefit promised on GOD's part, which is deliverance from the ill consequences and punishment of sin; "he will deliver his soul "from going into the pit, and his life shall see the "light," that is, he will deliver him from death and damnation. And though perhaps temporal death be here immediately intended, yet that is a type of our deliverance from eternal death; which is expressly promised in the gospel.

Secondly, Here is a condition required on our part; "If any say, I have sinned, and perverted "that which was right, and it profited me not." In which words there are contained,

I. A penitent confession of our sins to GOD; for "he looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sin-"ned," that is, make a penitent confession of his sin to GOD.

II. A true contrition for our sin, not only for fear of the pernicious consequences of sin, and the

puniſhment that will follow it, implied in theſe words, "and it profited me not," this is but a very imperfect contrition: but from a juſt ſenſe of the evil nature of ſin, and the fault and offence of it againſt GOD, that we have done contrary to right and our duty. "If any ſay, I have ſinned, and perverted "that which was right." Here you ſee that true and perfect contrition for our ſins, is made a neceſſary condition of the bleſſing and benefit here promiſed, viz. deliverance from the puniſhment due to them.

III. Here is a deſcription of the evil nature of ſin, it is "a perverting of that which is right." Sin is a perverting of the conſtitution and appointment of GOD, and of the nature and order of things. GOD hath given man a law and rule to walk by, but "the "fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way." The great lines of our duty are plain and viſible to all men; and if we would attend to the direction of our own minds, concerning good and evil, every man would be "a law to himſelf." "He hath ſhewed thee, O "man, what is good." That which is right and juſt and good is plain and obvious, and offers itſelf firſt to us; and whenever we ſin, we go out of the right way that lies plain before us, and "turn "aſide into crooked paths." But when we do that which is right, we act agreeably to the deſign and frame of our beings, and comply with the true nature and order of things; we do what becomes us, and are what we ought to be: but ſin perverts the nature of things, and puts them out of courſe; "I have ſinned and perverted that which was right."

IV. You have here an acknowledgment of the miſchievous and pernicious conſequences of ſin; "I "have ſinned and perverted that which was right, "and it profited me not." Which laſt words are a

SERM. CLXII.

μειωσις, in which much leſs is ſaid than is meant and intended; "It profited me not," that is, it was ſo far from being of advantage, that the effects and conſequences of it were very pernicious and deſtructive.

And this is not only true as to the final iſſue, and event of an evil courſe in the other world; but I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that even in reſpect of this world, and the preſent life, the practice of ſome ſins is plainly miſchievous to the temporal intereſts of men; that others are wholly unprofitable; and that thoſe which pretend to bring ſome benefit and advantage, will, when all accounts are caſt up, and all circumſtances duly weighed and conſidered, be found to do far otherwiſe.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew, that the practice of ſome vices is evidently miſchievous and prejudicial to us, as to this world; as all thoſe vices which fall under the cognizance of human laws, and are puniſhed by them: murder, theft, perjury, ſedition, rebellion, and the like; theſe cannot be denied to be of pernicious conſequence to men, and therefore the great patrons of vice ſeldom plead for theſe, the inconvenience of them is ſo palpable, that ſome feel it, and all may ſee it every day.

But beſides theſe, there are many other ſorts of ſin, which human laws either take no notice of, or do not ſo ſeverely puniſh, which yet in their natural conſequences are very pernicious to our preſent intereſt; either they are a diſturbance to our minds, or dangerous to our health, or ruinous to our eſtate, or hurtful to our reputation, or it may be at once prejudicial to us, in all, or moſt of theſe reſpects; and theſe are the greateſt temporal inconveniencies that men are liable to.

All irregular paſſions, as wrath, malice, envy,

SERM. CLXII.

impatience and revenge, are not only a diſturbance to ourſelves, but they naturally draw upon us hatred and contempt from others. Any one of theſe paſſions is enough to render a man uneaſy to himſelf, and to make his converſation diſguſtful and troubleſom to all that are about him; for all men naturally hate all thoſe, who are of an envious, or malicious, or revengeful temper, and are apt to riſe up and ſtand upon their guard againſt them. Anger and impatience are great deformities of the mind, and make a man look as ugly, as if he had a wry and diſtorted countenance; and theſe paſſions are apt to breed in others a ſecret contempt of us, and to bring our prudence into queſtion, becauſe they are ſigns of a weak and impotent mind, that either hath loſt, or never had the government of itſelf.

There are other vices, which are plainly pernicious to our health, and do naturally bring pains and diſeaſes upon men; ſuch are intemperance and luſt: and though ſome may pretend to govern themſelves, in the practice of theſe, with ſo much moderation and diſcretion, as to prevent the notorious bad conſequences of them, yet there are very few or none that do ſo; this is ſeldom more than a ſpeculation, and men that allow themſelves in any lewd or intemperate courſe, will find it very hard to govern themſelves in it; for after men have forfeited their innocence, and broke in upon their natural modeſty, they are apt by degrees to grow profligate and deſperate. If a man gives way but little to his own vicious inclinations, they will ſoon get head of him, and no man knows how far they will hurry him at laſt.

Beſides, that the vices I am ſpeaking of, intemperance and luſt, have other great inconveniencies attending them, they expoſe men more frequently, than

than moſt other vices, to occaſions of quarrel, in which men often loſe their own lives, or take away other mens, by which they fall under the danger of the law, and the ſtroke of publick juſtice; or if they eſcape that, (as too often they do) they cannot fly from their own conſciences, which do commonly fill them with the horror and torment of ſuch an action all their days; ſo pernicious are the uſual conſequences of theſe vices, of which we ſee ſad inſtances every day.

Nor are theſe vices leſs hurtful to mens eſtates; for they are extremely expenſive and waſteful, and uſually make men careleſs of all their buſineſs and concernments, liable to be cheated by thoſe, whom they are forced to truſt with their affairs, becauſe they will not mind them themſelves, and to be abuſed by crafty men, who watch the opportunities of their folly and weakneſs, to draw them into fooliſh bargains. It is an old obſervation, that more men periſh by intemperance, than by the ſword; and I believe it is as true, that more eſtates are diſſipated and waſted by theſe two riotous vices, than by all other accidents whatſoever.

And there is ſcarce any notorious vice, by which men do not greatly ſuffer in their reputation and good name, even when the times are worſt and moſt degenerate; any wicked courſe, whether of debauchery or injuſtice, is a blemiſh to a man's credit, not only in the eſteem of the ſober and virtuous, but even of thoſe who are looſe and extravagant; for men are ſooner brought to practiſe what is bad, than to approve of it, and do generally think all ſin and wickedneſs to be a ſtain upon them, whatever in a ſwaggering humour they may ſay to the contrary. A clear evidence of this is, that men do ſo ſtudiouſly endeavour

SERM. CLXII.

deavour to conceal their vices, and are ſo careful that as few as may be ſhould be conſcious to them, and are ſo confounded if they be diſcovered, and ſo out of all patience when they are upbraided with them; a plain acknowledgment, that theſe things are ſhameful in themſelves, and whatever face men may put upon things, that they do inwardly and at the bottom of their hearts believe, that theſe practices are deſervedly of bad reputation, and do, in the general opinion of mankind, leave a blot upon them.

Secondly, There are other ſins, which though they are not uſually attended with conſequences ſo palpably miſchievous, yet are plainly unprofitable, and bring no manner of advantage to men.

Of this ſort is all kind of profaneneſs, and cuſtomary ſwearing in common converſation, there is neither profit nor pleaſure in them. What doth the profane man get by his contempt of religion? He is neither more reſpected nor better truſted for this quality; but on the contrary, it is many times really to his prejudice, and brings a great odium upon him, not only from thoſe who ſincerely love religion, but from others alſo; though they are conſcious to themſelves, that they do not love religion as they ought, yet they have a veneration for it, and cannot endure that any one ſhould ſpeak ſlightly of it.

And it is as hard to imagine, where the pleaſure of profaneneſs lies. Men cannot but at firſt have a great reluctancy in their minds againſt it, and muſt offer conſiderable violence to themſelves, to bring themſelves to it; and when it is grown more familiar, and their conſciences are become more ſeared and inſenſible, yet whenever they are alone and ſerious, or when any affliction or calamity is upon them, they are full of fears and anguiſh, their guilt

ſtares

ſtares them in the face, and their conſciences are raging and furious.

And as all kind of profaneneſs is unprofitable, ſo more eſpecially cuſtomary ſwearing in ordinary converſation, upon every occaſion of paſſion, or any other trivial cauſe, nay it may be without cauſe, out of mere habit and cuſtom. Now what can poſſibly be imagined to be the profit or pleaſure of this vice? ſenſual pleaſure in it there can be none, becauſe it is not founded in the temper of the body: a man may be naturally prone to anger or luſt; but no man I think is born with a ſwearing conſtitution.

And there is as little profit as pleaſure in it; for the common and trivial uſe of oaths makes them perfectly inſignificant to their end, and is ſo far from giving credit to a man's word, that it rather weakens the reputation of it.

Thirdly, Thoſe vices which pretend to be of advantage to us, when all accounts are caſt up, and all circumſtances duly conſidered, will be found to be quite otherwiſe. Some vices pretend to bring in profit, others to yield pleaſure; but upon a thorough examination of the matter, theſe pretences will vaniſh and come to nothing.

The vices which pretend to be moſt profitable are covetouſneſs and oppreſſion, fraud and falſhood, and perfidiouſneſs: but if we look well into them, we ſhall find that either they do not bring the advantages they pretend to bring; or that the inconveniencies which attend them are as great or greater, than the advantages they bring; or elſe that the practice of the oppoſite virtues would be of much greater advantage to us.

1. Some of theſe vices do not bring the advantages they pretend to do. Covetouſneſs may increaſe a man's

SERM. CLXII.

man's eſtate, but it adds nothing to his happineſs and contentment; for though his eſtate grow never ſo much, his want is ſtill as great as it was before, and his care and trouble continually greater; ſo that ſo long as he continues covetous, the more rich, the leſs happy.

And then for fraud and falſhood; they are not of that real and laſting advantage, that cunning but ſhort-ſighted men are apt to imagine. Nothing is truer than that of Solomon, "the lying tongue is "but for a moment." A man can practiſe the arts of falſhood and deceit but for a little while, before they will be diſcovered; and when they are diſcovered, they are ſo far from being any advantage to him, that they turn to his prejudice, and the cunning man begins to be in a bad caſe, and he that was wont to over-reach others, is at laſt caught himſelf.

2. Several of theſe vices are attended with inconveniencies, as great or greater than the advantages they bring. If a man increaſe his eſtate by injuſtice and oppreſſion, yet he loſeth his reputation. Beſides that all fraudulent and unjuſt courſes are apt to entangle a man in a great many inconveniencies, and to expoſe him to troubleſom ſuits, for the keeping of what he hath unjuſtly gotten; it is very often ſeen, that what is gotten by injuſtice is ſpent in law; and though it may be thoſe whom he hath wronged never recover their right, yet firſt or laſt the unjuſt man is put to more trouble and vexation about it, than the thing is worth. This Solomon obſerves, Prov. xv. 16. "In the revenue of the wicked there is "trouble."

The perfidious man by betraying a friend or a truſt, may perhaps make ſome preſent advantage: but then by ſuch a villainy he makes himſelf odious

to

to all mankind, and by this means, at one time or other, prevents himself of greater advantages which he might have had another way; and perhaps at last is miserably crushed by those whom he betrayed, who, in the change and revolution of human affairs, may some time or other have the opportunity of being revenged. Or else,

3. The practice of the opposite virtues would be of far greater advantage to us.

Truth and fidelity are in common experience found to be a better and surer way of thriving, and more like to last and hold out, than fraud and falshood; and as honesty is a surer way of raising an estate, so it brings along with it greater security of the quiet enjoyment of it. There is never any real occasion, and seldom any colour and pretence of bringing such a man into trouble; for which reason Solomon says, "Better is the little which the righteous man hath, "than great possessions without right:" because, though it be but little, yet it will wear like steel, and he is like to enjoy it quietly, and may increase it; whereas the unjust man is continually in danger of losing what he hath gotten.

And if this be the case, it is very plain, that those vices which pretend to bring the greatest advantage, are really unprofitable; and to these kind of vices the text seems to point more particularly; "if any "say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was "right, and it profited me not, &c."

But perhaps though there be no profit in any sinful course, yet there may be some pleasure. That comes next to be examined; and I doubt not to make it evident, that there is no such pleasure in sin, as can make it a reasonable temptation to any man to venture upon it. The vices which pretend to bring

SERM. CLXII.

the greateſt pleaſure, are lewdneſs, and intemperance, and revenge.

The two firſt of theſe are the higheſt pretenders to pleaſure: but GOD knows, and the ſinner himſelf knows, how thin and tranſitory this pleaſure is, how much trouble attends it, and how many ſighs and groans follow it, and whatever pleaſure they may miniſter to the ſenſe, they bring a great deal of anguiſh and perplexity to the mind; ſo that the trouble which they cauſe, does more than countervail the pleaſure which they bring: and they do not only diſturb the mind, but they diſeaſe the body. How many are there, who for the gratifying of an inordinate luſt, and for the incomprehenſible pleaſure of a drunken fit, have endured the violent burnings of a fever, or elſe have conſumed the remainder of their days in languiſhing ſickneſs and pain?

And the reaſon of all this is plain, becauſe all the pleaſures of ſin are violent, and forced, and unnatural, and therefore not like to continue; they are founded in ſome diſeaſe and diſtemper of our minds, and therefore always end in pain and ſmart.

And as for revenge; it is indeed a very eager and impatient deſire: but ſo far ſurely from being a pleaſure, that the very thoughts of it are extremely troubleſom, and raiſe as great ſtorms in the mind of a man, as any paſſion whatſoever: and I never heard of the pleaſure of being in a ſtorm; it is pleaſant indeed to be out of it, when others are in it. And when revenge hath ſatisfied itſelf, and laid it's enemy bleeding at it's foot, the man that executed it commonly repents himſelf the next moment, and would give all the world to undo what he hath done; ſo that if there be any pleaſure in revenge, it is ſo flitting and of ſo ſhort a continuance, that

we know not where to fix it; for there is nothing but tumult and rage before the execution of it, and after it nothing but remorſe and horror; ſo that if it be a pleaſure, it is but of one moment's continuance, and laſts no longer than the act is a doing; and what man in his wits would purchaſe ſo ſhort a pleaſure at ſo dear a price? This is moſt certainly true, and if it were well conſidered, ſufficient to convince any reaſonable man of the unreaſonableneſs of this paſſion.

Cain is a fearful inſtance of this kind, who after he had drawn his brother into the field, and ſlain him there, how was he tormented with the guilt of what he had done, and forced to cry out, "my puniſhment is greater than I can bear," (or as ſome tranſlations render the words) "mine iniquity is "greater than that it can be forgiven!" Gen. iv. 13. "From thy face, (ſays he to GOD, in the anguiſh of his ſoul) "from thy face ſhall I be hid, and I "ſhall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; "and it ſhall come to paſs that every one that findeth me ſhall ſlay me, v. 14. Every one that findeth me," how fearful did his guilt make him! when probably there was then but one man in the world beſides himſelf. And I may ſay of this ſort of men, as St. Jude does of thoſe in his time, Jude v. 11. "Wo "unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain," they are guilty of his crime, and his doom ſhall be theirs.

And here I cannot but take notice of a great evil that grows daily upon us, and therefore deſerves with the greateſt ſeverity to be diſcountenanced and puniſhed, I mean that of duels, than which what can be more unchriſtian? And what can be more unreaſonable, than for men upon deliberation, and after the heat of paſſion is over, to reſolve to ſheath their ſwords in one another's bowels, only for a haſty word?

SERM. CLXII.

And which is yet more unreaſonable, that becauſe two men are angry, and have quarrelled with one another, and will fight it out, that therefore two more, who have no quarrel, no kind of diſpleaſure againſt one another, muſt fight too, and kill one another if they can for no reaſon, and upon no provocation. Theſe falſe rules of honour will not paſs in another world in the higheſt and greateſt court of honour, from whence there is no appeal.

I ſhall conclude this whole argument with that excellent ſaying of Cato, reported in A. Gellius, "cogitate cum animis veſtris, &c." "conſider (ſays "he) with yourſelves, if ye be at any trouble and "pain to do a good action, the trouble will be ſoon "over; but the pleaſure and comfort of what ye "have done well, abides with you all your days: "but if to gratify yourſelves, you do any thing "that is wicked, the pleaſure will quickly vaniſh; "but the guilt of it will ſtick by you for ever."

And is it not then much better to prevent all this trouble, by denying ourſelves theſe ſinful pleaſures, which will follow us with guilt whilſt we live, and fill us with horror and deſpair when we come to die?

I ſhall now make ſome reflections upon what has been delivered, and ſo conclude.

Firſt, What hath been ſaid upon this argument, ought particularly to move thoſe who have ſo great a conſideration of this preſent life, and the temporal happineſs of it, that the practice of all virtues is a friend to their temporal, as well as eternal welfare, and all vice is an enemy to both.

Secondly, This likewiſe takes off all manner of excuſe from ſin and vice. It pretends not to ſerve the ſoul, and to profit our future happineſs in another world; and if it be an enemy alſo to our preſent wel-

welfare in this world, what is there to be said for it? SERM. CLXII.

Thirdly, (which I desire to insist a little longer upon) all the arguments which I have used, to convince men of the folly of a wicked course, are so many strong and unanswerable reasons for repentance; for when a man is convinced, that "he hath done foolishly, and to his own prejudice, that he hath sinned, "and that it profited him not," what can he do less, than to be heartily sorry for it, and ashamed of it, and resolved to do better for the future? Nothing surely is more reasonable than repentance; and yet how hard is it to bring men to it? Either men will mistake the nature of it, and not do it effectually; or they will delay it, and not do it in time.

I. Men mistake the nature of repentance; and there are two great mistakes about it.

1. Of those who make the great force and virtue of it to consist, not so much in the resolution of the penitent, as in the absolution of the priest. And this the church of Rome, in their doctrine concerning repentance, does. For their sacrament of penance (as they call it) they make to consist of two parts; the matter of it, which consists in these three acts of the penitent, confession, contrition, and satisfaction; and the form of it, which is the absolution of the priest, in which they make the main virtue and force of repentance to consist; *in quâ præcipuè ipsius vis sita est*, are the very words of the council of Trent. And here is a wide difference betwixt us; for though the comfort of the penitent may in some case consist in the absolution of the priest, yet the virtue and efficacy of repentance does not at all consist in it, but wholly in the contrition and sincere resolution of the penitent, as the scripture every where declares: and to think otherwise, is of dangerous

dangerous conſequence; becauſe it encourageth men to hope for the benefit of repentance, that is, the pardon and forgiveneſs of their ſins, without having truly repented. And indeed the council of Trent have ſo framed their doctrines in this point, that any one may ſee, that they did not matter how much they abated on the part of the penitent, provided the power of the prieſt be but advanced, and kept up in it's full height.

2. The other miſtake is of thoſe, who make repentance to conſiſt in the bare reſolution of amendment, though it never has it's effect; that is, though the ſinner either do not what he reſolved, or do it only for a fit, and during his preſent trouble and conviction.

There is one caſe indeed, and but one, wherein a reſolution not brought to effect is available, and that is, when nothing hinders the performance and execution of it, but only want of time and opportunity for it; when the repentance is ſincere, and the reſolution real, but the man is cut off between the actual reformation which he intended, and which GOD, who ſees things certainly in their cauſes, knows would have followed, if the man had lived to give demonſtration of it. But this is nothing to thoſe who have the opportunity to make good their reſolution, and do not: for, becauſe the reſolution which would have been performed, had there been time and opportunity, is reckoned for a true repentance, and accepted of GOD as if it had been done; therefore the reſolution which was not brought to effect when there was time and opportunity for it, hath not the nature of true repentance, nor will it be accepted of GOD.

I will add but one thing more upon this head, becauſe

cauſe I doubt it is not always ſufficiently conſidered; and that is this, that a ſincere reſolution of a better courſe does imply a reſolution of the means, as well as of the end; he that is truly reſolved againſt any ſin, is likewiſe reſolved againſt the occaſions and temptations that would lead and draw him to it; otherwiſe he hath taken up a raſh and fooliſh reſolution, which he is not like to keep, becauſe he did not reſolve upon that which was neceſſary to the keeping of it. So he that reſolves upon any part of his duty, muſt likewiſe reſolve upon the means which are neceſſary to the diſcharge and performance of it; he that is reſolved to be juſt in his dealing, and to pay his debts, muſt be diligent in his calling, and mind his buſineſs, becauſe without this he cannot do the other; for nothing can be more vain and fond, than for a man to pretend that he is reſolved upon doing his duty, when he neglects any thing that is neceſſary to put him into a capacity, and to further him in the diſcharge of it. This is, as if a man ſhould reſolve to be well, and yet never take phyſick, or be careleſs in obſerving the rules which are preſcribed in order to his health. So for a man to reſolve againſt drunkenneſs, and yet to run himſelf upon the temptations which naturally lead to it, by frequenting the company of lewd and intemperate perſons, this is, as if a man ſhould reſolve againſt the plague, and run into the peſt-houſe. Whatever can reaſonably move a man to be reſolved upon any end, will, if this reſolution be wiſe and honeſt, determine him as ſtrongly to uſe the means which are proper and neceſſary to that end.

Theſe are the common miſtakes about this matter, which men are the more willing to run into, becauſe they are loth to be brought to a true repentance;

SERM. CLXII.

ance; the nature whereof is not difficult to be underſtood, (for nothing in the world is plainer;) only men are always ſlow to underſtand what they have no mind to put in practice. But,

II. Beſides theſe miſtakes about repentance, there is another great miſcarriage in this matter, and that is the delay of repentance; men are loth to ſet about it, and therefore they put it upon their laſt hazard, and reſolve then to huddle it up as well as they can: but this certainly is great folly, to be ſtill making more work for repentance, becauſe it is to create ſo much needleſs trouble and vexation to ourſelves; it is to go on ſtill in playing a fooliſh part, in hopes to retrieve all by an after-game; this is extremely dangerous, becauſe we may certainly ſin, but it is not certain we ſhall repent, our repentance may be prevented, and we may be cut off in our ſins; but if we ſhould have ſpace for it, repentance may in proceſs of time grow an hundred times more difficult than it is at preſent.

But if it were much more certain, and more eaſy than it is, if it were nothing but a hearty ſorrow and ſhame for our ſins, and an aſking GOD forgiveneſs for them, without being put to the trouble of reforming our wicked lives, yet this were great folly, to do thoſe things which will certainly grieve us after we have done them, and put us to ſhame, and to aſk forgiveneſs for them. It was well ſaid of old Cato, *næ tu ſtultus es homuncio, qui malis veniam precari, quam non peccare*; "thou art a fooliſh man "indeed, who chuſeſt rather to aſk forgiveneſs, "than not to offend."

At the beſt, repentance implies a fault; it is an after-wiſdom, which ſuppoſeth a man at firſt to have plaid the fool; it is but the beſt end of a bad buſi-

neſs;

buſineſs; a hard ſhift, and a deſperate hazard, which a man that had acted prudently would never have been put to; it is a plaiſter after we have dangerouſly wounded ourſelves: but certainly it had been much wiſer, to have prevented the danger of the wound, and the pain of curing it. A wiſe man would not make himſelf ſick if he could, or if he were already ſo, would not make himſelf ſicker, though he had the moſt effectual and infallible remedy in the world in his power: but this is not the caſe of a ſinner, for repentance as well as faith is the gift of GOD.

Above all, let me caution you, not to put off this great and neceſſary work, to the moſt unſeaſonable time of all other, the time of ſickneſs and death, upon a fond preſumption, that you can be reconciled to GOD when you pleaſe, and exerciſe ſuch a repentance as will make your peace with him at any time.

I am heartily afraid, that a very great part of mankind do miſcarry upon this confidence, and are ſwallowed up in the gulf of eternal perdition, with this plank in their arms. The common cuſtom is (and I fear it is too common) when the phyſician hath given over his patient, then, and not till then, to ſend for the miniſter; not ſo much to enquire into the man's condition, and to give him ſuitable advice, as to miniſter comfort, and to ſpeak peace to him at a venture.

But let me tell you, that herein you put an extreme difficult taſk upon us, in expecting that we ſhould pour wine and oil into the wound before it be ſearched, and ſpeak ſmooth and comfortable things to a man, that is but juſt brought to a ſenſe of the long courſe of a lewd and wicked life, impenitently continued in. Alas! what comfort can we give to men in ſuch a caſe? We are loth to drive them to de-

ſpair; and yet we muſt not deſtroy them by preſumption; pity and good nature do ſtrongly tempt us to make the beſt of their caſe, and to give them all the little hopes, which with any kind of reaſon we can, and GOD knows it is but very little that we can give to ſuch perſons upon good ground; for it all depends upon the degree and ſincerity of their repentance, which GOD only knows, and we can but gueſs at. We can eaſily tell them what they ought to have done, and what they ſhould do if they were to live longer, and what is the beſt that they can do in thoſe ſtraights into which they have brought themſelves, viz. to exerciſe as deep a ſorrow and repentance for their ſins as is poſſible, and to cry mightily to GOD for mercy, in and through the merit of our bleſſed SAVIOUR. But how far this will be available in theſe circumſtances we cannot tell; becauſe we do not know, whether if the man had lived longer, this repentance and theſe reſolutions which he now declares of a better courſe, would have been good.

And after all is done that can be done in ſo ſhort a time, and in ſuch circumſtances of confuſion and diſorder, as commonly attend dying perſons, I doubt the reſult of all will be this; that there is much more ground of fear than hope concerning them; nay perhaps, while we are preſſing the dying ſinner to repentance, and he is bungling about it, he expires in great doubt and perplexity of mind what will become of him; or if his eyes be cloſed with more comfortable hopes of his condition, the next time he opens them again, he may find his fearful miſtake, like the rich man in the parable, who when he was "in hell, lift up his eyes being in "torment."

This is a very diſmal and melancholy conſideration,

and commands all men presently to repent, and not to put off the main work of their lives to the end of them, and the time of sickness and old age. Let us not offer up a carcass to God instead of a living and acceptable sacrifice: but let us turn to God, in the days of our health and strength, "before the "evil days come, and the years draw nigh, of which "we shall say we have no pleasure in them; before "the sun and the moon and the stars be darkned;" as Solomon elegantly expresseth it, Eccles. xii. 1, 2. before all the comforts of life be gone, before our faculties be all ceased and spent, before our understandings be too weak, and our wills too strong; our understandings be too weak for consideration, and the deliberate exercise of repentance, and our wills too strong and stiff to be bent and bowed to it.

Let us not deceive ourselves, heaven is not an hospital made to receive all sick and aged persons, that can but put up a faint request to be admitted there; no, no, they are never like to see the kingdom of God, who instead of seeking it in the first place, make it their last refuge and retreat; and when they find the sentence of death upon them, only to avoid present execution, do bethink themselves of getting to heaven, and since there is no other remedy, are contented to petition the great king and judge of the world, that they may be transported thither.

Upon all these considerations, let us use no delay in a matter of such mighty consequence to our eternal happiness, but let the counsel which was given to Nebuchadnezzar be acceptable to us; let us "break "off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities "by shewing mercy to the poor; if so be it may "be a lengthening of our tranquillity." Repentance

and alms do well together; "let us break off our "ſins by righteouſneſs, and our iniquities by ſhew- "ing mercy to the poor;" eſpecially upon this great occaſion, which his majeſty's great goodneſs to thoſe diſtreſſed ſtrangers, that have taken ſanctuary among us, hath lately preſented us withal, "re- "membring that we alſo are in the body," and liable to the like ſufferings; and conſidering on the one hand, that gracious promiſe of our LORD, "Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall receive "mercy;" and on the other hand, that terrible threatening in St. James, "He ſhall have judg- "ment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy."

To conclude, from all that hath been ſaid, let us take up a preſent reſolution of a better courſe, and enter immediately upon it, "to day whilſt it is call- "ed to day, leſt any of you be hardened through "the deceitfulneſs of ſin. O that men were wiſe, "that they underſtood this, that they would conſi- "der their latter end! And grant we beſeech thee "Almighty GOD, that we may all know and do, "in this our day, the things which belong to our "peace, for thy mercy's ſake in JESUS CHRIST, "to whom with thee, O Father, and the Holy "Ghoſt, be all honour and glory now and for ever." Amen.

SER-

SERMON CLXIII.

The ſhamefulneſs of ſin, an argument for repentance.

ROM. vi. 21, 22.

What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is death. But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to GOD, *ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life.*

SERM. CLXIII. The firſt ſermon on this text.

THERE are two paſſions which do always in ſome degree or other accompany a true repentance, viz. Sorrow and ſhame for our ſins; becauſe theſe are neceſſary to engage men to a reſolution of making that change wherein repentance does conſiſt: for till we are heartily ſorry for what we have done, and aſhamed of the evil of it, it is not likely that we ſhould ever come to a firm and ſteady purpoſe of forſaking our evil ways, and betaking ourſelves to a better courſe.

And theſe two paſſions of ſorrow and ſhame for our ſins, were wont anciently to be ſignified by thoſe outward expreſſions of humiliation and repentance, which we find ſo frequently mentioned in ſcripture, of "being clothed in ſackcloth" as a teſtimony of our ſorrow and mourning for our ſins, and of "being ſprinkled upon the head, and covered over "with filth and dirt, with duſt and aſhes," in token of our ſhame and confuſion of face for all our iniquities and tranſgreſſions. Hence are thoſe expreſſions in ſcripture of "repenting in ſackcloth and aſhes, of "lying down in our ſhame, and being covered with "confuſion,"

SERM. CLXIII. "confuſion," in token of their great ſorrow and ſhame for the manifold and heinous ſins, which they had been guilty of.

Of the former of theſe, viz. trouble and ſorrow *SERM. CLXI. for our ſins, I have very lately * treated; and of the latter, I intend now by God's aſſiſtance to ſpeak, viz. ſhame for our ſins, and that from theſe words which I have recited to you; "what fruit had ye then in "thoſe things?" &c. In which words the apoſtle makes a compariſon between an holy and virtuous, and a ſinful and vicious courſe of life, and ſets before us a perfect enumeration of the manifeſt inconveniencies of the one, and the manifold advantages of the other.

Firſt, The manifeſt inconveniencies of a vicious and ſinful courſe; and the apoſtle mentions theſe three.

I. It is unprofitable, it brings no manner of preſent benefit and advantage to us, if all things be rightly calculated and conſidered. "What fruit had ye "then in thoſe things?" Then (i. e.) at the time when you committed thoſe ſins, had you any preſent advantage by them? No, certainly; but quite contrary.

II. The reflection upon our ſins afterwards is cauſe of ſhame and confuſion to us; "What fruit "had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now "aſhamed?"

III. The final iſſue and conſequence of theſe things is very diſmal and miſerable; "the end of thoſe "things is death." Let us put theſe things together, and ſee what they amount to: No fruit then when ye did theſe things, and ſhame now when ye come afterwards to reflect upon them, and death and miſery at the laſt.

Secondly,

SERM. CLXIII.

Secondly, Here is likewiſe on the other hand repreſented to us the manifold benefits of an holy and virtuous life. And that upon theſe two accounts.

I. Of the preſent benefit of it, which the apoſtle calls here, fruit; "ye have your fruit unto holineſs."

II. In reſpect of the future reward of it; "and "the end everlaſting life." Here is a conſiderable earneſt in hand, and a mighty recompence afterwards, infinitely beyond the proportion of our beſt actions and ſervices, both in reſpect of the greatneſs and the duration of it, "everlaſting life;" for a few tranſient and very imperfect actions of obedience, a perfect and immutable and endleſs ſtate of happineſs. I ſhall begin with the

Firſt of the two general heads, viz. the manifeſt inconveniencies of a ſinful and vicious courſe; and the apoſtle I told you in the text takes notice of three.

I. It is unprofitable, and if all things be rightly calculated and conſidered, it brings no manner of preſent advantage and benefit to us. "What fruit had "ye then in thoſe things?" Then (i. e.) when ye committed thoſe ſins, had you any preſent advantage by them? No, certainly, quite contrary; as if the apoſtle had ſaid, if you ſeriouſly reflect upon your former courſe of impiety and ſin, wherein you have continued ſo long, you cannot but acknowledge that it brought no manner of advantage to you; and when all accounts are truly caſt up, you muſt, if you will confeſs the truth, own that you were in no ſort gainers by it: For the words are a μειωσις, and the apoſtle plainly intends more than he expreſſeth, "What fruit had ye then in thoſe things?" (i. e.) the wicked courſe which ye formerly lived in, was ſo far from being any ways beneficial to you, that it was on the contrary upon all accounts extremely to your prejudice and diſadvantage. And

SERM. CLXIII.

And this is not only true in respect of the final issue and consequence of a sinful and vicious course of life, that no man is a gainer by it at the long run; and if we take into our consideration another world, and the dreadful and endless misery which a wicked and impenitent life will then plunge men into (which in the farther handling of this text will at large be spoken to, being the last of the three particulars under this first general head:) But it is true likewise, even in respect of this world, and with regard only to this present and temporal life, without looking so far as the future recompence and punishment of sin in another world.

And this would plainly appear, by an induction of these three particulars.

1. It is evident that some sins are plainly mischievous to the temporal interest of men, as tending either to the disturbance of their minds, or the endangering of their healths and lives, or to the prejudice of their estates, or the blasting of them in their reputation and good name.

2. That there are other sins, which though they are not so visibly burdened and attended with mischievous consequences, yet they are plainly unprofitable, and bring no manner of real advantage to men, either in respect of gain or pleasure; such are the sins of profaneness, and customary swearing in common conversation.

3. That even those sins and vices, which make the fairest pretence to be of advantage to us, when all accounts are cast up, and all circumstances duly weighed and considered, will be found to be but pretenders, and in no degree able to perform and make good what they so largely promise before hand, when they tempt us to the commission of them. There

are

SERM. CLXIII.

are ſome vices, which pretend to bring in great profit, and tempt worldly-minded men, whoſe minds are diſpoſed to catch at that bait; ſuch are the ſins of covetouſneſs and oppreſſion, of fraud and falſhood and perfidiouſneſs. And there are others which pretend to bring pleaſure along with them, which is almoſt an irreſiſtible temptation to voluptuous and ſenſual men; ſuch are the ſins of revenge, and intemperance, and luſt. But upon a particular examination of each of theſe, it will evidently appear, that there is no ſuch profit or pleaſure in any of theſe vices, as can be a reaſonable temptation to any man to fall in love with them, and to engage in the commiſſion and practice of them. But I ſhall not now inlarge upon any of theſe, having lately diſcourſed upon them from another text. I ſhall therefore proceed to the

II. Inconvenience which I mentioned of a ſinful and vicious courſe, viz. that the reflection upon our ſins afterwards, is cauſe of great ſhame and confuſion to us. "What fruit had you then in thoſe things, "whereof you are now aſhamed?" And this is a very proper argument for this ſeaſon; becauſe the paſſion of ſhame, as it is a natural and uſual conſequent of ſin, ſo it is a diſpoſition neceſſarily required to a true repentance. Preached in Lent.

Moſt men when they commit a known fault are apt to be aſhamed, and ready to bluſh whenever they are put in mind of it, and charged with it. Some perſons indeed have gone ſo far in ſin, and have waded ſo deep in a vicious courſe, as to be confirmed and hardened in their wickedneſs to that degree as to be paſt all ſhame, and almoſt all ſenſe of their faults; eſpecially in regard of the more common and ordinary vices, which are in vogue and faſhion, and in the commiſſion

SERM. CLXIII.

whereof they are countenanced and encouraged by company and example, ſuch were thoſe of whom the prophet ſpeaks, Jer. vi. 15. "Were they aſhamed, "when they had committed abomination? nay, "they were not aſhamed, neither could they bluſh."

But yet even theſe perſons, when they come to be ſenſible of their guilt, ſo as to be brought to repentance, they cannot then but be aſhamed of what they have done. For what face ſoever men may ſet upon their vices, ſin is ſhameful in itſelf, and ſo apt to fill men with "confuſion of face," when they ſeriouſly reflect upon it, that they cannot harden their foreheads againſt all ſenſe of ſhame. And whatever men may declare to the contrary, this is tacitly acknowledged by the generality of men, in that they are ſo ſolicitous and careful to conceal their faults from the eyes of others, and to keep them as ſecret as they can; and whenever they are diſcovered and laid open, 'tis matter of great trouble and confuſion to them; and if any one happen to upbraid and twit them with their miſcarriages of any kind, they cannot bear with patience to hear of them.

There are indeed ſome few ſuch prodigies and monſters of men, as are able after great ſtruglings with their conſciences, to force themſelves to boaſt impudently of their wickedneſs, and "to glory in "their ſhame;" not becauſe they do really and inwardly believe their vices to be an honour and glory to them, but becauſe conſcious to themſelves that they have done ſhameful things, and believing that others know it, they put on "a whore's forehead," and think to prevent the upbraiding of others, by owning what they have done, and ſeeming to glory in it: but yet for all that, theſe perſons, if they would confeſs the truth, do feel ſome confuſion in them-

themſelves, and they are inwardly ſenſible of the infamy and reproach of ſuch actions, for all they would ſeem to the world to bear it out ſo well: For when all is done, there is a wide difference between the impudence of a criminal, and the confidence and aſſurance of a clear conſcience, that is fully ſatisfied of it's own innocence and integrity. The conſcientious man is not aſhamed of any thing that he hath done: but the impudent ſinner only ſeems not to be ſo, but all the while feels a great deal of confuſion in his own mind. The one is ſenſible and ſatisfied that there is no cauſe for ſhame: the other is conſcious to himſelf that there is cauſe, but he offers violence to himſelf, and ſuppreſſes all he can the ſenſe and ſhew of it, and will needs face down the world, that he hath no guilt and regret in his own mind for any thing that he hath done. SERM CLXIII.

Now that ſin is truly matter of ſhame, will be very evident, if we conſider theſe two things.

Firſt, If we conſider the nature of this paſſion of ſhame.

Secondly, If we conſider what there is in ſin, which gives real ground and occaſion for it.

Firſt, For the nature of this paſſion. Shame is the trouble or confuſion of mind, occaſioned by ſomething that tends to our diſgrace and diſhonour, to our infamy and reproach. Now there is nothing truly and really matter of ſhame and reproach to us, but what we ourſelves have done, or have been ſome way or other acceſſary to the doing of, by our own fault or neglect, and by conſequence what it was in our power and choice not to have done: For no man is aſhamed of what he is ſure he could not help. Neceſſity, unleſs it be wilful and contracted, and happens through ſome precedent occaſion and

SERM. CLXIII.

fault of our own, does take away all juſt cauſe of ſhame.

And nothing likewiſe is matter of ſhame, but ſomething which we ought not to do, which miſbecomes us, and is below the dignity and perfection of our nature, and is againſt ſome duty and obligation that is upon us to the contrary; and conſequently is a reproach to our reaſon and underſtanding, a reflection upon our prudence and diſcretion, and at firſt ſight hath an appearance of ruggedneſs and deformity.

And all actions of this nature do receive ſeveral aggravations, with reſpect to the perſons againſt whom, and in whoſe preſence, and under whoſe eye and knowledge theſe ſhameful things are done. Now I ſhall ſhew in the

Second place, That ſin contains in it whatſoever is juſtly accounted infamous, together with all the aggravations of ſhame and reproach that can be imagined. And this will appear by conſidering ſin and vice in theſe two reſpects;

I. In relation to ourſelves.

II. In reſpect to GOD, againſt whom, and in whoſe ſight it is committed.

I. In relation to ourſelves, there are theſe four things which make ſin and vice to be very ſhameful.

1. The natural ruggedneſs and deformity of it.

2. That it is ſo great a diſhonour to our nature, and to the dignity and excellency of our being.

3. That it is ſo great a reproach to our reaſon and underſtanding, and ſo foul a reflection upon our prudence and diſcretion.

4. That it is our own voluntary act and choice.

Every one of theſe conſiderations render it very ſhameful, and all of them together ought to fill the

ſinner

ſinner with "confuſion of face." I ſhall ſpeak to them ſeverally.

1. The natural ruggedneſs and deformity of ſin and vice render it very ſhameful. Men are apt to be aſhamed of any thing in them, or belonging to them, that looks ugly and monſtrous, and therefore they endeavour with great care and art to conceal and diſſemble their deformity in any kind. How ſtrangely do we ſee men concerned, with all their diligence and ſkill, to cover and palliate any defect or deformity in their bodies; an ill face, if they could, however a foul and bad complexion, or blind or ſquinting eye, a crooked body or limb, or whatever is ill-favoured or monſtrous. Now in regard of our ſouls and better part, ſin hath all the monſtrouſneſs and deformity in it, which we can imagine in the body, and much more; and it is as hard to be covered from the eye of diſcerning men, as the deformity of the body is; but impoſſible to be concealed from the eye of God, to whom "darkneſs "and light," ſecret and open are all one. But then the moral defects and deformities of the mind have this advantage above the natural defects and deformities of the body, that the former are poſſible to be cured by the grace of God, in conjunction with our own care and endeavour: Whereas no diligence or ſkill can ever help or remove many of the natural defects and deformities of the body.

Sin is the blindneſs of our minds, the perverſeneſs and crookedneſs of our wills, and the monſtrous irregularity and diſorder of our affections and appetites; it is the miſ-placing of our powers and faculties, the ſetting of our wills and paſſions above our reaſon; all which is ugly and unnatural, and, if we were truly ſenſible of it, matter of great ſhame and reproach to us. There

There is hardly any vice, but at firſt ſight hath an odious and ugly appearance to a well diſciplined and innocent mind, that hath never had any acquaintance with it. And however familiarity and cuſtom may abate the ſenſe of it's deformity, yet it is as it was before, and the change that is made in us does not alter the nature of the thing. Drunkenneſs and furious paſſion, pride and falſhood, covetouſneſs and cruelty, are odious, and matter of ſhame, in the ſincere and uncorrupted opinion of all mankind. And though a man, by the frequent practice of any of theſe vices, and a long familiarity with them, may not be ſo ſenſible of the deformity of them in himſelf, yet he quickly diſcerns the uglineſs of them in others, whenever they come in his way, and could with ſalt and ſharpneſs enough upbraid thoſe whom he ſees guilty of them, but that he is inwardly conſcious, that the reproach may be ſo eaſily returned, and thrown back upon himſelf. However this is a natural acknowledgment of the deformity and ſhamefulneſs of ſin and vice.

2. They are likewiſe ſhameful, becauſe they are ſo great a diſhonour to our nature, and to the dignity and excellency of our being. We go below ourſelves, and act beneath the dignity of our nature, when we do any thing contrary to the rules and laws of it, or to the revealed will of GOD; becauſe theſe are the bounds and limits which GOD and nature hath ſet to human actions; and are the meaſures of our duty, i. e. what is fit and becoming for us to do, and what not. So that all ſin and vice is baſe and unworthy, and beneath the dignity of our nature; it argues a corrupt and diſeaſed conſtitution and habit of mind, a crooked and perverſe diſpoſition of will, and a ſordid and mean temper of ſpirit.

And therefore the ſcripture doth frequently repreſent a ſtate of ſin and wickedneſs, by that which is accounted the baſeſt and meaneſt condition among men, by a ſtate of ſervitude and ſlavery, eſpecially if it had been our choice, or the evident and neceſſary conſequence of our wilful fault: for we do as bad as chuſe it, when we wilfully bring it upon ourſelves. So that to be a ſinner, is to be a ſlave to ſome vile luſt, appetite, or paſſion, to ſome unnatural or irregular deſire; it is to ſell ourſelves into bondage, and to part with one of the moſt valuable things in the world, our liberty, upon low and unworthy terms. Such a ſtate and condition does unavoidably debaſe and debauch our minds, and break the force and firmneſs of our ſpirits, and robs us, as Dalilah did Sampſon, of our ſtrength and courage, of our reſolution and conſtancy; ſo that men have not the heart left to deſign and endeavour in good earneſt their own reſcue out of this mean and miſerable eſtate, into which by their own folly and fault they have brought themſelves.

When men are engaged into a cuſtom of ſinning, and have habituated themſelves to any vicious courſe, how do they betray their weakneſs and want of reſolution, by being at the beck of every fooliſh luſt, and by ſuffering themſelves to be commanded and hurried away by every unruly appetite and paſſion, to do things which they know to be greatly to their harm and prejudice, and which they are convinced are mean and ſordid things, and ſuch as they are aſhamed that any wiſe man ſhould ſee them doing! and there is no greater argument of a pitiful and degenerate ſpirit, than to commit ſuch things as a man would bluſh to be ſurprized in, and would be mightily troubled to hear of afterwards. And which is more,

more, after he hath been convinced by manifold experience, that they are a ſhame and diſgrace to him, and make him to hang down his head, and let fall his countenance, whenever he is in better company than himſelf; yet after this to go and do the ſame things again, which he is ſenſible are ſo ſhameful, and to be ſo impotent, and to have ſo little command of himſelf, as not to be able to free himſelf from this bondage, nor the heart to pray to GOD that by his grace he would enable him thereto.

And that ſin is of this ſhameful nature, is evident, in that the greateſt part of ſinners take ſo much care and pains to hide their vices from the ſight and notice of men, and to this purpoſe chuſe darkneſs and ſecret places of retirement to commit their ſins in. The apoſtle takes notice, that thus much modeſty was left even in a very wicked and degenerate age, 1 Theſ. v. 7. "They that be drunk (ſays he) "are drunk in the night." Now all this is a plain acknowledgment, that ſin is a ſpurious and degenerate thing, that it miſbecomes human nature, and is below the dignity of a reaſonable creature: otherwiſe why ſhould men be ſo ſolicitous and concerned to cover their faults from the ſight of others? If they are not aſhamed of them, why do they not bring them into the broad light, and ſhew them openly, if they think they will endure it?

So true is that obſervation which Plato makes, that though a man were ſure that GOD would forgive his ſins, and that men ſhould never know them, yet there is that baſeneſs in ſin, that a wiſe man, that conſiders what it is, would bluſh to himſelf alone to be guilty of it; and though he were not afraid of the puniſhment, would be aſhamed of the turpitude and deformity of it.

Did

Did but a man consider seriously with himself, how mean and unmanly it is for a man to be drunk; and what an apish and ridiculous thing he renders himself to all sober men that behold him, and with what contempt and scorn they entertain such a sight; and how brutish it is to wallow in any unlawful lust, and how much a man descends and stoops beneath himself; what shameful fear and cowardice he betrays when he is frighted to tell a lie out of fear, or tempted thereto for some little advantage; and yet is so inconsistent with himself, as to have, or to pretend to have the courage to fight any man, that shall tell him so sawcy a truth, as that he told a lie.

Would but a man think before-hand, how unworthy, and how unequal a thing it is to defraud or cheat his brother, or to do any thing to another man, which he would be loth in the like case that he should do to him; how base a thing it is, for a man to be perfidious and false to his promise or trust; how monstrous to be unthankful to one that hath highly obliged him, and every way and upon all occasions deserved well at his hands; and so I might instance in all other sorts of sins; I say, he that considers this well and wisely, though there were no law against sin, and (if it were a possible case, and fit to be supposed) though there were no such being as God in the world, to call him to account and punish him for it, yet out of mere generosity and greatness of mind, out of pure respect to himself, and the dignity and rank of his being, and of his order in the world, out of very reverence to human nature, and the inward persuasion of his own mind, (however he came by that persuasion) concerning the indecency and deformity and shamefulness of the thing; I say, for these reasons, if there were no other, a man would strive with

SERM. CLXIII.

himſelf, with all his might, to refrain from ſin and vice, and not only bluſh, but abhor to think of doing a wicked action.

3. Sin will yet farther appear ſhameful, in that it is ſo great a reproach to our underſtandings and reaſons, and ſo foul a blot upon our prudence and diſcretion. *Omnis peccans aut ignorans eſt, aut incogitans*, is a ſaying, I think, of one of the ſchool-men; (as one would gueſs by the Latin of it) "Every ſinner "is either an ignorant, or an inconſiderate perſon." Either men do not underſtand what they do, when they commit ſin; or if they do know, they do not actually attend to, and conſider what they know. Either they are habitually or actually ignorant of what they do; for ſin and conſideration cannot dwell together; it is ſo very unreaſonable and abſurd a thing, that it requires either groſs ignorance, or ſtupid inadvertency, to make a man capable of committing it. Whenever a man ſins, he muſt either be deſtitute of reaſon, or muſt lay it aſide or aſleep for the time, and ſo ſuffer himſelf to be hurried away, and to act brutiſhly, as if he had no underſtanding.

Did but men attentively conſider what it is to offend GOD, and to break the laws of that great lawgiver, who "is able to ſave or to deſtroy," they would diſcern ſo many invincible objections againſt the thing, and would be filled with ſuch ſtrong fears and jealouſies of the fatal iſſue and event of it, that they would not dare to venture upon it. And therefore we find the ſcripture ſo frequently reſolving the wickedneſs of men into their ignorance and inconſiderateneſs, Pſal. xiv. 4. "Have all the workers of "iniquity no knowledge?" intimating that by their actions one would judge ſo. And the ſame account

GOD

God himself also gives elsewhere of the frequent disobedience and rebellion of the people of Israel, Deut. xxxii. 28, 29. "They are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. "Oh! that they were wise, that they understood "this, that they would consider their latter end!" Knowledge and consideration would cure a great part of the wickedness that is in the world; men would not commit sin with so much greediness, would they but take time to consider and bethink themselves what they do.

Have we not reason then to be ashamed of sin, which casts such a reproach of ignorance and rashness upon us? And of imprudence likewise and indiscretion? Since nothing can be more directly and plainly against our greatest and best interest both of body and soul, both here and hereafter, both now and to all eternity. And there is nothing that men are more ashamed of, than to be guilty of so great an imprudence, as to act clearly against their own interest, to which sin is the most plainly cross and contrary, that it is possible for any thing to be. No man can engage and continue in a sinful course, without being so far abused and infatuated, as to be contented to part with everlasting happiness, and to be undone and miserable for ever; none but he that can persuade himself against all the reason and sense of mankind, that there is pleasure enough in the transient acts of sin, to make amends for eternal sorrow, and shame, and suffering. And can such a thought as this enter into the heart of a considerate man? Epicurus was so wise, as to conclude against all pleasures that would give a man more trouble and disturbance afterwards; against all pleasures that had pain and grief consequent upon them: and he for-

SERM. CLXIII.

bids his wiſe man to taſte of them, or to meddle with them; and had he believed any thing of a future ſtate, he muſt, according to his principle, have pronounced it the greateſt folly that could be, for any man to purchaſe the pleaſures and happineſs of a few years, at the dear rate of eternal miſery and torment. So that if it be a diſgrace to a man to act imprudently, and to do things plainly againſt his intereſt, then vice is the greateſt reproach that is poſſible.

The fourth and laſt conſideration, which renders ſin ſo ſhameful to us, is, that it is our own voluntary act and choice. We chuſe this diſgrace, and willingly bring this reproach upon ourſelves. We pity an ideot, and one that is naturally deſtitute of underſtanding, or one that loſeth the uſe of his reaſon by a diſeaſe or other inevitable accident: but every one deſpiſeth him who beſots himſelf, and plays the fool out of careleſneſs and a groſs neglect of himſelf. And this is the caſe of the ſinner; there is no man that ſinneth, but becauſe he is wanting to himſelf; he might be wiſer and do better, and will not; but he chuſes his own devices, and voluntarily runs himſelf upon thoſe inconveniencies, which it was in his power to have avoided.

Not but that I do heartily own and lament the great corruption and degeneracy of our nature, and the ſtrong propenſions which appear ſo early in us to that which is evil: but GOD hath provided a remedy and cure for all this: For ſince "the grace of GOD "which brings ſalvation unto all men hath appear-"ed," under the influence and through the aſſiſtance of that grace, which is offered to them by the goſpel, men may "deny ungodlineſs and worldly "luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly "in this preſent world." For I make no doubt, but

but ſince GOD has entered into a new covenant of grace with mankind, and offered new terms of life and ſalvation to us; I ſay, I doubt not, but his grace is ready at hand, to enable us to perform all thoſe conditions which he requires of us, if we be not wanting to ourſelves.

There was a way of ſalvation eſtabliſhed, before the goſpel was clearly revealed to the world; and they who under that diſpenſation, whether Jews or Gentiles, ſincerely endeavoured to do the will of GOD, ſo far as they knew it, were not utterly deſtitute of divine grace and aſſiſtance: but now there is a more plentiful effuſion of GOD's grace and holy ſpirit; ſo that whoever under the goſpel ſins deliberately, ſins wilfully, and is wicked, not for want of power but of will to do otherwiſe. And this is that which makes ſin ſo ſhameful a thing, and ſo very reproachful to us, that we deſtroy ourſelves by our own folly and neglect of ourſelves, and become miſerable by our own choice, and when the grace of GOD hath put it into our power to be wiſe and to be happy.

I ſhould now have proceeded to the ſecond thing I propoſed, which was to conſider ſin in relation to GOD, and to ſhew that it is no leſs ſhameful in that reſpect, than I have ſhewn it to be with regard to ourſelves: but this I ſhall refer to another opportunity.

SERMON CLXIV.

The ſhamefulneſs of ſin, an argument for repentance.

ROM. vi. 21, 22.

What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is death. But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to GOD, *ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life.*

SERM. CLXIV. The ſecond ſermon on this text.

IN theſe words the apoſtle makes a compariſon, between an holy and virtuous, and a ſinful and vicious courſe of life, and ſets before us a perfect enumeration of the manifold inconveniencies of the one, and the manifold advantages of the other.

I began with the firſt of theſe, viz. to ſhew the manifeſt inconveniencies of a ſinful and vicious courſe. I am upon the ſecond inconvenience of a ſinful courſe, viz. that the reflection upon it afterwards is cauſe of great ſhame and "confuſion of face" to us; and that

Firſt, In relation to ourſelves. Which I have diſpatched, and proceed now in the

Second place, To conſider ſin in reſpect of GOD, againſt whom, and in whoſe ſight and preſence it is committed; and upon examination it will appear to be no leſs ſhameful in this reſpect than the other.

There are ſome perſons before whom we are more apt to be aſhamed and bluſh, than before others; as thoſe whom we reverence, thoſe to whom we are greatly obliged, and thoſe who are clear of thoſe faults

faults which we are guilty of; and thoſe who hate or greatly diſlike what we do; eſpecially if they be preſent with us, and in our company; if they ſtand by us, and obſerve, and take notice of what we do, and are likely to publiſh our folly and make it known, and have authority and power to puniſh us for our faults; we are aſhamed to have done any thing that is vile and unworthy before ſuch perſons. Now to render ſin the more ſhameful, GOD may be conſidered by us under all theſe notions, and in all theſe reſpects.

1. Whenever we commit any ſin, we do it before him, in his preſence, and under his eye and knowledge, to whom of all perſons in the world we ought to pay the moſt profound reverence. I remember Seneca ſomewhere ſays; that "there are ſome per-"ſons, *quorum interventu perditi quoque homines vi-*"*tia ſupprimerent*, that they are ſo awful and ſo "generally reverenced for the eminency of their "virtues, that even the moſt profligate and impu-"dent ſinners will endeavour to ſuppreſs their vices, "and refrain from any thing that is notoriouſly "bad, and uncomely, whilſt ſuch perſons ſtand by "them, and are in preſence." Such an one was Cato among the Romans. The people of Rome had ſuch a regard and reverence for him, that if he appeared, they would not begin or continue their uſual ſports, till he was withdrawn from the theatre, thinking them too light to be acted before a perſon of his gravity and virtue: and if they were ſo much awed by the preſence of a wiſe and virtuous man, that they were aſhamed to do any thing that was unſeemly before him; how much more ſhould the preſence of the holy GOD, who is "of purer eyes "than to behold iniquity," make us bluſh to do

any thing that is lewd and vile in his ſight, and fill us with ſhame and "confuſion of face" at the thoughts of it? Now whenever we commit any ſin, GOD looks upon us; and he alone is an ample theatre indeed. That he obſerves what we do, ought to be more to us, than if the eyes of all the world beſides were gazing upon us.

2. He likewiſe is incomparably our greateſt benefactor, and there is no perſon in the world, to whom in any degree we ſtand ſo much obliged, as to him; and from whom we can expect and hope for ſo much good, as from him; the conſideration whereof muſt make us aſhamed, ſo often as we conſider, and are conſcious to ourſelves, that we have done any thing that is grievous and diſpleaſing to him.

We are wont to have a peculiar reverence for thoſe to whom we are exceedingly beholden, and to be much aſhamed to do any thing before them, which may ſignify diſreſpect, and much more enmity againſt them; becauſe this would be horrible ingratitude, one of the moſt odious and ſhameful of all vices. And is there any one to whom we can ſtand more obliged, than to him that made us, than to the author and founder of our beings, and the great patron and preſerver of our lives; and can there then be any before whom, and againſt whom we ſhould be more aſhamed to offend? When the prodigal in the parable would ſet forth the ſhamefulneſs of his miſcarriage, he aggravates it from hence, that he had offended againſt and before one to whom he had been ſo infinitely obliged: "Father, ſays he, "I have ſinned againſt heaven, and in thy ſight."

3. We are aſhamed likewiſe to be guilty of any fault or crime before thoſe perſons who are clear of it, or of any thing of the like nature themſelves.

Men

Men are not apt to be ashamed before those who are their fellow-criminals, and involved with them in the same guilt, because they do not stand in awe of them, nor can have any reverence for them. Those, who are equally guilty, must bear with one another. We are not apt to fear the censures and reproofs of those, who are as bad as ourselves; but we are ashamed to do a foul and unworthy action, before those who are innocent and free from the same, or the like sins and vices which we are guilty of.

Now whenever we commit any sin, it is in the presence of the holy God, who hath no part with us in our crimes, whose nature is removed at the farthest distance from sin, and is as contrary to it as can be. "There is no iniquity with the Lord our "God." And therefore of all persons in the world we should blush to be guilty of it before him.

4. We are apt also to be ashamed to do any thing before those who dislike and detest what we do. To do a wicked action before those who are not offended at it, or perhaps take pleasure in it, is no such matter of shame to us. Now of all others, God is the greatest hater of sin, and the most perfect enemy to it in the whole world. Hab. i. 13. "Thou art of "purer eyes, than to behold evil, and canst not look "on iniquity," i. e. with patience, and without an infinite hatred and abhorrence of it. Such is the unspotted purity and perfection of the divine nature, that it is not possible that God should give the least countenance to any thing that is evil. Psal. v. 4, 5. "Thou art not a God," says David there to him, "that hast pleasure in iniquity, neither "shall evil dwell with thee: The wicked shall not "stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of "iniquity."

5. We are aſhamed likewiſe to do any thing that is evil and unſeemly before thoſe, who we are afraid will publiſh our faults to others, and will make known and expoſe the folly of them. Now whenever we ſin, it is before him who will moſt certainly one day bring all our works of darkneſs into the open light, and expoſe all our ſecret deeds of diſhoneſty upon the publick ſtage of the world, and make all the vileſt of our actions known, and lay them open, with all the ſhameful circumſtances of them, before men and angels, to our everlaſting ſhame and confuſion. This is the meaning of that proverbial ſpeech, ſo often uſed by our SAVIOUR, "There is "nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed, nei- "ther hid that ſhall not be made manifeſt." All the ſins which we now commit with ſo much caution, in ſecret and dark retirements, ſhall in that great day of revelation, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be diſcloſed, be ſet in open view, and in ſo full and ſtrong a light, that all the world ſhall ſee them; and that which was plotted and contrived in ſo much ſecrecy, and hardly whiſpered in this world, ſhall then "be proclaimed aloud," and as it were "upon the "houſe tops."

6. And laſtly, We are aſhamed and afraid to commit a fault before thoſe, who we believe will call us to an account for it, and puniſh us ſeverely. A man may ſuffer innocently and for a good cauſe; but all ſuffering in that caſe is by wiſe and good men eſteemed honourable and glorious, and though we are condemned by men, we are acquitted in our own conſciences: But that which is properly called puniſhment is always attended with infamy and reproach; becauſe it always ſuppoſeth ſome fault and crime, as the ground and reaſon of it. Hence it is

that in this world men are not only afraid, but ashamed to commit any fault before those, who they think have authority and power to punish it. He is an impudent villain indeed, that will venture to cut a purse in the presence of the judge.

Now whenever we commit any wickedness, we do it under the eye of the great Judge of the world, who stedfastly beholds us, and whose omnipotent justice stands by us ready armed and charged for our destruction, and can in a moment cut us off. Every sin that we are guilty of, in thought, word or deed, is all in the presence of the holy, and just, and powerful GOD; whose power enables him, and whose holiness and justice will effectually engage him, one time or other, if a timely repentance doth not prevent it, to inflict a terrible punishment upon all the workers of iniquity.

You see then by all that hath been said upon this argument, how shameful a thing sin is, and what "confusion of face" the reflection upon our wicked lives ought to cause in all of us. "What fruit had "ye then in those things, whereof ye are now asham-"ed?" If ever we be brought to true repentance for our sins, it cannot but be matter of great shame to us.

We find in scripture that shame doth continually accompany repentance, and is inseparable from it. This is one mark and character of a true penitent, that he is ashamed of what he hath done. Thus Ezra, when he makes confession of the sins of the people, he testifies and declares his shame for what they had done; "I said, O my GOD! I am asham-"ed, and blush to lift up mine eyes to thee my "GOD; for our iniquities are increased over our "heads, and our trespasses are grown up to the

SERM. CLXIV.

" heavens," Ezra ix. 6. And may not we of this nation at this day take theſe words unto ourſelves, conſidering to what a ſtrange height our ſins are grown, and how iniquity abounds among us? So likewiſe the prophet Jeremiah, when he would expreſs the repentance of the people of Iſrael, Jer. iii. 25. " We lye down (ſays he) in our ſhame, and " our confuſion covereth us, becauſe we have ſinned " againſt the LORD our GOD." In like manner the prophet Daniel, after he had in the name of the people made [illegible] humble acknowledgment of their manifold and great ſins, he takes ſhame to himſelf and them, for them. Dan. ix. 5. " We have ſin- " ned, ſays he, and have committed iniquity, and " have done wickedly, and have rebelled in depart- " ing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments. " O LORD, righteouſneſs belongeth to thee; but " unto us confuſion of face, as at this day; to the " men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſa- " lem, and unto all Iſrael, that are near, and that are " far off, through all the countries whither thou haſt " driven them, becauſe of their treſpaſs, which they " have treſpaſſed againſt thee: O LORD! to us be- " longeth confuſion of face, to our kings, to our " princes, and to our fathers, becauſe we have ſin- " ned againſt thee." By which we may judge, how conſiderable and eſſential a part of repentance, this holy man eſteemed ſhame, for the ſins they had been guilty of, to be. And indeed upon all occaſions of ſolemn repentance and humiliation for ſin, this taking ſhame for their ſins is hardly ever omitted, as if there could be no ſincere confeſſion of ſin and repentance for it, without teſtifying their ſhame, and " confuſion of face" upon the remembrance of their ſins.

Now

SERM. CLXIV.

Now to ſtir up this affection of ſhame in us, let me offer to you theſe three conſiderations.

I. Conſider what great reaſon we have to be heartily aſhamed of all the ſins and offences which we have been guilty of againſt GOD. It was a good old precept of philoſophy, That we ſhould reverence ourſelves, i. e. that we ſhould never do any thing that ſhould be matter of ſhame and reproach to us afterwards, nothing that miſbecomes us, and is unworthy of us.

I have ſhewn at large, that all ſin and vice is a diſhonour to our nature, and beneath the dignity of it; that it is a great reproach to our reaſon, and directly contrary to our true and beſt intereſt; that it hath all the aggravating circumſtances of infamy and ſhame; that every ſin that was at any time committed by us, was done in the preſence of one, whom of all perſons in the world we have moſt reaſon to reverence, and againſt him, to whom of all others we ſtand moſt obliged for the greateſt favours, for innumerable benefits, for infinite mercy and patience and forbearance towards us, in the preſence of the holy and juſt GOD, who is at the fartheſt diſtance from ſin, and the greateſt and moſt implacable enemy to it in the whole world; and who will one day puniſh all our faults, and expoſe us to open ſhame for them; who will "bring every work into judgment, and "every ſecret ſin" that ever we committed, and take vengeance upon us for all our iniquities. So that whenever we ſin, we ſhamefully intreat ourſelves, and give the deepeſt wounds to our reputation in the eſteem of him, who is the moſt competent judge of what is truly honourable and praiſe-worthy, and clothe ourſelves with ſhame and diſhonour.

We are aſhamed of poverty, becauſe the poor man

is

SERM. CLXIV.

is deſpiſed, and almoſt ridiculous in the eye of the proud and covetous rich man, "whoſe riches are his "high tower," and make him apt to look down upon the poor man that is below him, with contempt and ſcorn; we are aſhamed of a dangerous and contagious diſeaſe, becauſe all men fly infectious company: but a man may be poor or ſick by misfortune; but no man is wicked, but by his own fault and wilful choice. Ill-natured and inconſiderate men will be apt to contemn us for our poverty and affliction in any kind: but by our vices we render ourſelves odious to GOD, and to all good and conſiderate men.

II. Conſider that ſhame for ſin now, is the way to prevent eternal ſhame and confuſion hereafter. For this is one great part of the miſery of another world, that the ſinner ſhall then "be filled with everlaſting "ſhame and confuſion" at the remembrance of his faults and folly. The eternal miſery of wicked men is ſometimes in ſcripture repreſented, as if it conſiſted only or chiefly in the infamy and reproach which will then overwhelm them, when all their crimes and faults ſhall be expoſed and laid open to the view of the whole world, Dan. xii. 2. where the general reſurrection of the juſt and unjuſt is thus deſcribed; "Many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth "ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to "everlaſting ſhame and contempt:" where everlaſting life and everlaſting ſhame are oppoſed, as if eternal ſhame were a kind of perpetual death.

In this world ſinners make a hard ſhift, by concealing or extenuating their faults, as well as they can, to ſuppreſs or leſſen their ſhame; they have not now ſo clear and full a conviction of the evil and folly of their ſin; GOD is pleaſed to bear with them, and to ſpare them at preſent, and they do not yet feel the diſmal

diſmal effects and conſequences of a wicked life: but in the next world, when "the righteous judgment "of GOD is revealed," and the full vials of his wrath ſhall be poured forth upon ſinners, they ſhall then "be clothed with ſhame as with a garment, and "be covered with confuſion:" then they will feel the folly of their ſins, and have a ſenſible demonſtration within themſelves of the infinite evil of them; their own conſciences will then furiouſly fly in their faces, and with the greateſt bitterneſs and rage upbraid and reproach them with the folly of their own doings; and ſo long as we are ſenſible, that we ſuffer for our own folly, ſo long we muſt unavoidably be aſhamed of what we have done. So that if ſinners ſhall be everlaſtingly tormented in another world, it neceſſarily follows, that they ſhall be eternally confounded.

Is it not then better to remember our ways now, and to be aſhamed and repent of them, than to bring everlaſting ſhame and confuſion upon ourſelves, before GOD, and angels, and men? This is the argument which St. John uſeth, to take men off from ſin, and to engage them to holineſs and righteouſneſs of life; 1 Joh. ii. 28. "That when he ſhall appear," that is, when he ſhall come to judge the world, "we "may have confidence, and not be aſhamed before "him at his coming."

III. And laſtly, Conſider that nothing ſets men at a farther diſtance from repentance, and all hopes of their becoming better, and brings them nearer to ruin, than impudence in a ſinful courſe. There are too many in the world, who are ſo far from being aſhamed of their wickedneſs, and bluſhing at the mention of their faults, that they boaſt of them, and glory in them. GOD often complains of this in the people

SERM. CLXIV.

people of Iſrael, as a ſad preſage of their ruin, and an ill ſign of their deſperate and irrecoverable condition: Jer. iii. 3. "Thou hadſt a whore's forehead, "and refuſedſt to be aſhamed;" and Jerem. vi. 15. "Were they aſhamed, when they committed abo- "minations? Nay, they were not aſhamed, neither "could they bluſh: therefore they ſhall fall among "them that fall, and in the time that I viſit them "they ſhall be caſt down." Hear likewiſe how the apoſtle doth lament the caſe of ſuch perſons, as are incurable and paſt all remedy: Philip iii. 18, 19. "There are many of whom I have told you often, "and now tell you, even weeping, that they are "enemies to the croſs of CHRIST; whoſe end is "deſtruction, whoſe God is their belly, whoſe glory "is in their ſhame." Such perſons who glory in that which ought to be their ſhame, what can their end be but deſtruction?

There is certainly no greater argument of a degenerate perſon, and of one that is utterly loſt to all ſenſe of goodneſs, than to be void of ſhame: and as on the one hand, they muſt be very towardly, and well diſpoſed to virtue, who are drawn by ingenuity, and meer ſenſe of obligation and kindneſs; ſo on the other hand, they muſt be very ſtupid and inſenſible, who are not wrought upon by arguments of fear, and ſenſe of ſhame. There is hardly any hopes of that man, who is not to be reclaimed from an evil courſe, neither by the apprehenſion of danger, nor of diſgrace, and who can at once ſecurely neglect both his ſafety and reputation.

Hear how the prophet repreſents the deplorable caſe of ſuch perſons, Iſa. iii. 9. "The ſhew of their "countenance bears witneſs againſt them;" in the Hebrew it is, "The hardneſs of their countenance "doth

" doth teſtify againſt them, and they declare their " ſin as Sodom, they hide it not. Wo unto their " ſouls, for they have rewarded evil to themſelves." When men are once arrived to that pitch of impiety, as to harden their foreheads againſt all ſenſe and ſhew of ſhame, and ſo as to be able to ſet a good face upon the fouleſt matter in the world; " wo unto " them," becauſe their caſe ſeems then to be deſperate, and paſt all hopes of recovery. For who can hope, that a man will forſake his ſins, when he is not ſo much as aſhamed of them? But yet one would think, that thoſe that are not aſhamed of their impiety, ſhould be aſhamed of their impudence, and ſhould at leaſt bluſh at this, that they can do the vileſt and the moſt ſhameful things in the world without bluſhing.

To conclude this whole diſcourſe, let the conſideration of the evil and ſhamefulneſs of ſin have this double effect upon us, to make us heartily aſhamed of the paſt errors and miſcarriages of our lives, and firmly reſolved to do better for the future.

I. To be heartily aſhamed of the paſt errors of our lives. So often as we reflect upon the manifold and heinous provocations of the divine majeſty, which many of us have been guilty of in the long courſe of a wicked life, together with the heavy aggravations of our ſins, by all the circumſtances that can render them abominable and ſhameful, not only in the eye of GOD and men, but of our own conſciences likewiſe; we have great reaſon to humble ourſelves before GOD, in a penitent acknowledgment of them, and every one of us to ſay with Job, " Behold I am vile, " what ſhall I anſwer thee? I will lay mine hand " upon my mouth, I abhor myſelf, and repent in " duſt and aſhes;" and with Ezra, " O my GOD!

SERM. CLXIV.

"I am aſhamed, and bluſh to lift up my face to "thee, my GOD; for our iniquities are increaſed over "our heads, and our treſpaſs is grown up unto the "heavens: And now, O my GOD, what ſhall we "ſay after this? for we have forſaken thy command-"ments;" and with holy Daniel, "we have ſinned, "and have committed iniquity, and have done "wickedly; O LORD! righteouſneſs belongeth un-"to thee, but unto us confuſion of face." Thus we ſhould reproach and upbraid ourſelves in the preſence of that holy GOD, whom we have ſo often and ſo highly offended, and againſt whom we have done as evil things as we could, and ſay with the prodigal ſon in the parable; "Father, I have ſinned againſt "heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy "to be called thy ſon."

If we would thus take ſhame to ourſelves, and humble ourſelves before GOD, he would "be merci-"ful to us miſerable ſinners;" he would "take away "all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly;" and ſo ſoon as ever he ſaw us coming towards him, would meet us with joy, and embrace us in the arms of his mercy. And then,

II. As we ſhould be heartily aſhamed of the paſt errors and miſcarriages of our lives, ſo we ſhould firmly reſolve, by GOD's grace, to do better for the future; never to conſent to iniquity, or to do any thing which we are convinced is contrary to our duty, and which will be matter of ſhame to us, when we come to look back upon it, and make our blood to riſe in our faces at the mention or intimation of it; which will make us to ſneak, and "hang down our "heads," when we are twitted and upbraided with it, and which, if it be not prevented by a timely humiliation and repentance, will fill us with horror

and amazement, with ſhame and confuſion of face, both at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.

So that when we look into our lives, and examine the actions of them, when we conſider what we have done, and what our doings have deſerved, we ſhould, in a due ſenſe of the great and manifold miſcarriages of our lives, and from a deep ſorrow and ſhame and deteſtation of ourſelves for them; I ſay, we ſhould, with that true penitent deſcribed in Job, take words to ourſelves, and ſay, "ſurely it is meet "to be ſaid unto GOD, I will not offend any more; "that which I know not, teach thou me; and if I "have done iniquity, I will do no more." And thus I have done with the ſecond inconvenience of a ſinful and vicious courſe of life, viz. that the reflection upon it afterwards cauſeth ſhame; "What fruit "had you then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now "aſhamed?"

SERMON CLXV.

The final iſſue of ſin, an argument for repentance.

ROM. vi. 21, 22.

What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is death. But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to GOD, *ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life.*

SERM. CLXV.

The third ſermon on this text.

THESE words are a compariſon between an holy and virtuous and a ſinful and vicious courſe of life, and ſet before us the manifeſt inconveniencies

SERM. CLXV.

veniencies of the one, and the manifold advantages of the other. I have entered into a diſcourſe upon the firſt of theſe heads, viz. The manifeſt inconveniencies of a ſinful and vicious courſe: and the text mentions theſe three.

I. That it is unprofitable.

II. That the reflection upon it afterwards is matter of ſhame. Theſe two I have ſpoken largely to. I ſhall now proceed to the

III. And laſt inconvenience, which the text mentions, of a ſinful and vicious courſe of life, viz. that the final iſſue and conſequence of theſe things is very diſmal and miſerable; "the end of thoſe things is "death." No fruit then when ye did theſe things; ſhame now that you come to reflect upon them; and miſery and death at the laſt.

There are indeed almoſt innumerable conſiderations and arguments to diſcourage and deter men from ſin; the unreaſonableneſs of it in itſelf; the injuſtice and diſloyalty, and ingratitude of it in reſpect to GOD; the ill example of it to others; the cruelty of it to ourſelves; the ſhame and diſhonour that attends it; the grief and ſorrow which it will coſt us, if ever we be brought to a due ſenſe of it; the trouble and horror of a guilty conſcience, that will perpetually haunt us; but above all the miſerable event and ſad iſſue of a wicked courſe of life continued in, and finally unrepented of. The temptations to ſin may be alluring enough, and look upon us with a ſmiling countenance, and the commiſſion may afford us a ſhort and imperfect pleaſure: but the remembrance of it will certainly be bitter, and the end of it miſerable.

And this conſideration is of all others the moſt apt to work upon the generality of men, eſpecially upon

upon the more obſtinate and obdurate ſort of ſinners, and thoſe whom no other arguments will penetrate; that whatever the preſent pleaſure and advantage of ſin may be, it will be bitterneſs and miſery in the end. SERM. CLXV.

The two former inconveniencies of a ſinful courſe, which I have lately diſcourſed of, viz. That ſin is unprofitable, and that it is ſhameful, are very conſiderable, and ought to be great arguments againſt it to every ſinner, and conſiderate man: and yet how light are they, and but as the very ſmall duſt upon the balance, in compariſon of that inſupportable weight of miſery which will oppreſs the ſinner at laſt! "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil." This, this is the ſting of all, that "the end of theſe "things is death."

It is very uſual in ſcripture to expreſs the greateſt happineſs, and the greateſt miſery, by life and death; life being the firſt and moſt deſirable of all other bleſſings, becauſe it is the foundation of them, and that which makes us capable of all the reſt. Hence we find in ſcripture, that all the bleſſings of the goſpel are ſummed up in this one word, "John xx. 31. "Theſe things are written, that you might believe "that JESUS is the CHRIST, the Son of GOD, and "that believing ye might have life through his "name." 1 John iv. 9. "In this was manifeſt the "love of GOD towards us, becauſe that GOD ſent his "only begotten Son into the world, that we might "live through him." So that under this term or notion of life, the ſcripture is wont to expreſs all happineſs to us, and more eſpecially that eternal life which is the great promiſe of the goſpel. And this is life by way of eminency; as if this frail and mortal and miſerable life, which we live here in this world, did not deſerve that name. And

SERM. CLXV.

And on the other hand, all the evils which are consequent upon sin, especially the dreadful and lasting misery of another world, are called by the name of death, "the end of these things is death." So the apostle, here in the text, and v. 23. "The "wages of sin is death," not only a temporal death, but such a death as is opposed to eternal life; "The "wages of sin is death: but the gift of GOD is eter- "nal life through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." So that death here in the text is plainly intended to comprehend in it all those fearful and astonishing miseries, wherewith the wrath of GOD will pursue and afflict sinners in another world.

But what and how great this misery is, I am not able to declare to you; "it hath" no more "en- "tered into the heart of man," than those great and glorious things which "GOD hath laid up for them "that love him:" and as I would fain hope, that none of us here shall ever have the sad experience of it; so none but those who have felt it, are able to give a tolerable description of the intolerableness of it.

But by what the scripture hath said of it in general, and in such metaphors as are most level to our present capacity, it appears so full of terror, that I am loth to attempt the representation of it. There are so many other arguments, that are more human and natural, and more proper to work upon the reason and ingenuity of men; as the great love and kindness of GOD to us; the grievous sufferings of his Son for us; the unreasonableness and shamefulness of sin; the present benefit and advantage, the peace and pleasure of an holy and virtuous life; and the mighty rewards promised to it in another world, that one would think these should be abundantly sufficient to prevail with men to gain them to goodness,

neſs, and that they need not to be frighted into it, and to have the law laid to them, as it was once given to the people of "Iſrael, in thunder and light-"ning, in blackneſs, in darkneſs and tempeſt," ſo as to make them "exceedingly to fear and tremble." And it ſeems a very hard caſe, that when we have to deal with men, ſenſible enough of their intereſt in other caſes, and diligent enough to mind it, we cannot perſuade them to accept of happineſs, without ſetting before them the terrors of eternal darkneſs, and thoſe amazing and endleſs miſeries, which will certainly be the portion of thoſe who refuſe ſo great an happineſs; this I ſay ſeems very hard, that men muſt be carried to the gate of hell, before they can be brought to ſet their faces towards heaven, and to think in good earneſt of getting thither.

And yet it cannot be diſſembled, that the nature of men is ſo degenerate, as to ſtand in need of this argument; and that men are ſo far engaged in an evil courſe, that they are not to be reclaimed from it by any other conſideration, but of the endleſs and unſpeakable miſery of impenitent ſinners in another world. And therefore GOD, knowing how neceſſary this is, doth frequently make uſe of it; and our bleſſed SAVIOUR, than whom none was ever more mild and gentle, doth often ſet this conſideration before men to take them off from ſin, and to bring them to do better. And this St. Paul tells us, Rom. i. 18. is one principal thing which renders the goſpel ſo powerful an inſtrument for the reforming and ſaving of mankind, becauſe "therein the wrath of "GOD is revealed from heaven, againſt all ungod-"lineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men."

So that how harſh and unpleaſant ſoever this argument may be, the great ſtupidity and folly of ſome men,

SERM. CLV.

men, and their inveterate obstinacy in an evil course makes it necessary for us to press it home, that those who will not be moved, and made sensible of the danger and inconvenience of sin by gentler arguments, may be roused and awakened by the terrors of eternal misery.

That the last issue and consequence of a wicked life will be very miserable, the general apprehension of mankind concerning the fate of bad men in another world, and the secret misgivings of mens consciences, gives men too much ground to fear. Besides that the justice of divine providence, which is not many times in this world so clear and manifest, does seem to require that there should be a time of recompence, when the virtue and patience of good men should be rewarded, and the insolence and obstinacy of bad men should be punished. This cannot but appear very reasonable to any man, that considers the nature of GOD, and is persuaded that he governs the world, and hath given laws to mankind, by the observance whereof they may be happy, and by the neglect and contempt whereof they must be miserable.

But that there might remain no doubts upon the minds of men, concerning these matters, GOD hath been pleased to reveal this from heaven, by a person sent by him on purpose to declare it to the world; and to the truth of these doctrines concerning a future state and a day of judgment, and recompences, GOD hath given testimony by unquestionable miracles wrought for the confirmation of them, and particularly by "the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST "from the dead, whereby he hath given an assu-"rance unto all men, that he is" the person "ordained by GOD to judge the world in righteousness,

"and

" and to render to every man according to his deeds; SERM. CLXV.
" to them who by patient continuance in well-do-
" ing ſeek for glory, and honour and immortality,
" eternal life; but to them who obey not the truth,
" but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath,
" tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man
" that doeth evil."

So that how quietly ſoever wicked men may paſs through this world, or out of it, (which they ſeldom do) miſery will certainly overtake their ſins at laſt; unſpeakable and intolerable miſery, ariſing from the anguiſh of a guilty conſcience, from a lively apprehenſion of their ſad loſs, and from a quick ſenſe of the ſharp pain which they labour under; and all this aggravated and ſet off with the conſideration of paſt pleaſure, and the deſpair of future eaſe. Each of theſe is miſery enough, and all of them together do conſtitute and make up that diſmal and forlorn ſtate, which the ſcripture calls hell and damnation.

I ſhall therefore briefly repreſent (for it is by no means deſirable to dwell long upon ſo melancholy and frightful an argument)

Firſt, The principal ingredients which conſtitute this miſerable ſtate. And,

Secondly, The aggravations of it.

Firſt, The principal ingredients which conſtitute this miſerable ſtate; and they are theſe three which I have mentioned.

I. The anguiſh of a guilty mind.

II. The lively apprehenſions of the invaluable happineſs which they have loſt.

III. A quick ſenſe of the intolerable pains which they lie under.

I. The anguiſh of a guilty conſcience. And this is natural; for there is a worm that abides in a guilty con-

SERM. CLXV.

conscience, and is continually gnawing it. This is that our SAVIOUR calls "the worm that dies not." And though GOD should inflict no positive punishment upon sinners, yet this is a revenge which every man's mind would take upon him; for things are so ordered by GOD, in the original frame and constitution of our minds, that on the one hand peace and pleasure, contentment and satisfaction do naturally arise in our minds from the conscience of well-doing, and spring up in the soul of every good man: and on the other hand, no man knowingly does an evil action, but his guilty conscience galls him for it, and the remembrance of it is full of bitterness to him.

And this the sinner feels in this world; he disguiseth and dissembleth his trouble as much as he can, and shifts off these uneasy thoughts by all the diversions he can devise, and by this means palliates his disease, and renders his condition in some sort tolerable unto himself: but when he is alone, or cast upon the bed of sickness, and his thoughts are let loose upon him, and he hath nothing to give them a diversion, how does his guilt ferment and work! and the fever, which lurked before, does now shew itself, and is ready to burn him up; so that nothing can appear more dismal and ghastly, than such a man does to himself.

And much more, when sinners come into the other world, and are entered into the regions of darkness, and the melancholy shades, where evil spirits are continually wandring up and down; where they can meet with nothing either of employment or pleasure, to give the least diversion to their pensive minds; where they shall find nothing to do, but to reflect upon, and bemoan themselves; where all the wicked actions that ever they committed shall come fresh

into their minds, and ſtare their conſciences in the face. It is not to be imagined, what ſad ſcenes will then be preſent to their imaginations, and what ſharp reflections their own guilty minds will make upon them, and what ſwarms of furies will poſſeſs them.

So ſoon as ever they are entered upon that ſtate, they will then find themſelves forſaken of all thoſe comforts which they once placed ſo much happineſs in; and they will have nothing to converſe with, but their own uneaſy ſelves, and thoſe that are as miſerable as themſelves, and therefore uncapable of adminiſtring any comfort to one another. They will then have nothing to think on, but what will trouble them; and every new thought will be a new increaſe of their trouble. Their guilt will make them reſtleſs, and the more reſtleſs they are, the more will their minds be enraged; and there will be no end of their vexation, becauſe the cauſe and ground of it is perpetual. For there is no poſſible way to get rid of guilt, but by repentance; and there is no encouragement, no argument to repentance, where there is no hope of pardon. So that if GOD ſhould hold his hand, and leave ſinners to themſelves, and to the laſhes of their own conſcience, a more ſevere and terrible torment can hardly be imagined, than that which a guilty mind would execute upon itſelf.

II. Another ingredient into the miſeries of ſinners in another world, is the lively apprehenſion of the invaluable happineſs which they have loſt by their own obſtinacy and fooliſh choice. In the next world wicked men ſhall be for ever ſeparated from GOD, who is the fountain of happineſs, and from all the comforts of his preſence and favour. This, our SAVIOUR tells us, is the firſt part of that dreadful ſentence that ſhall be paſſed upon the wicked at the great

SERM. CLXV.

day; "depart from me;" which words, though they do not signify any positive infliction and torment, yet they import the greatest loss that can be imagined. And it is not so easy to determine which is the greatest of evils, loss or pain. Indeed to a creature that is only endowed with sense, there can be no misery but that of pain and suffering: but to those who have reason and understanding, and are capable of knowing the value of things, and of reflecting upon themselves in the want of them, the greatest loss may be as grievous and hard to be born as the greatest pain.

It is true, that sinners are now so immers'd in the gross and sensual delights of this world, that they have no apprehension of the joys of heaven, and the pleasures of God's presence, and of the happiness that is to be enjoyed in communion with him, and therefore they are not now capable of estimating the greatness of this loss. But this insensibleness of wicked men continues no longer than this present state, which affords them variety of objects of pleasure and of business to divert them and entertain them: but when they come into the other world, they shall then have nothing else to think upon, but the sad condition into which they have brought themselves, nothing to do but to pore and meditate upon their own misfortune, when they shall lift up their eyes, and with the rich man in the parable, in the midst of their torments, look up to those who are "in Abraham's bosom;" and their misery will be mightily increased by the contemplation of that happiness which others enjoy, and themselves have so foolishly forfeited and fallen short of; insomuch that it would be happy for them, if that God, from whose presence they are banished, that heaven from which they have excluded themselves,

and

and that everlasting glory, which they have despised and neglected, might be for ever hid from their eyes, and never come into their minds. SERM. CLXV.

III. This is not all, but besides the sad apprehension of their loss, they shall endure the sharpest pains. These GOD hath threatened sinners withal, and they are in scripture represented to us, by the most grievous and intolerable pains that in this world we are acquainted withal, as by the pain of burning. Hence the wicked are said "to be cast into the lake, "which burns with fire and brimstone, and into "the fire which is not quenched:" which, whether it be literally to be understood or not, is certainly intended to signify the most severe kind of torment; but what that is, and in what manner it shall be inflicted, none know but they that feel it, and lie under it. The scripture tells so much in general of it, as is enough to warn men to avoid it; that it is the effect of a mighty displeasure, and of anger armed with omnipotence, and consequently must needs be very terrible, more dreadful than we can now conceive, and probably greater than can be described by any of those pains and sufferings which now we are acquainted withal; for "who knows the power of GOD's "anger," and the utmost of what almighty justice can do to sinners? Who can comprehend the vast significancy of those expressions, "fear him, who af-"ter he hath killed can destroy both body and soul "in hell?" and again, "it is a fearful thing to fall "into the hands of the living GOD?" One would think this were misery enough, and needed no farther aggravation; and yet it hath two terrible ones, from the consideration of past pleasures which sinners have enjoyed in this world, and from an utter despair of future ease and remedy.

1. From

1. From the consideration of the past pleasures which sinners have enjoyed in this life. This will make their sufferings much more sharp and sensible; for as nothing commends pleasure more, and gives happiness a quicker taste and relish, than precedent sufferings and pain, there is not perhaps a greater pleasure in the world, than the strange and sudden ease which a man finds after a sharp fit of the stone or colick, or after a man is taken off the rack, and nature which was in an agony before is all at once set at perfect ease: so on the other hand, nothing exasperates suffering more, and sets a keener edge upon misery, than to step into afflictions and pain immediately out of a state of great ease and pleasure. This we find in the parable was the great aggravation of the rich man's torment, that he had first "received his good things," and was afterwards tormented. We may do well to consider this, that those pleasures of sin which have now so much of temptation in them, will in the next world be one of the chief aggravations of our torment.

2. The greatest aggravation of this misery will be, that it is attended with the despair of any future ease; and when misery and despair meet together, they make a man completely miserable. The duration of this misery is expressed to us in scripture, by such words as are used to signify the longest and most interminable duration. "Depart ye cursed into ever-"lasting fire, Matt. xxv. 41. Where the worm dieth "not, and the fire is not quenched," Mark ix. 43. And 2 Thess. i. 7. it is there said, that those "who "know not God, and obey not the gospel of his "Son, shall be punish'd with everlasting destruc-"tion, from the presence of the Lord, and from "the glory of his power." And in Rev. xx. 10.

That

That "the wicked shall be tormented day and night "for ever and ever." And what can be imagined beyond this? This is the perfection of misery, to lye under the greatest torment, and yet be in despair of ever finding the least ease.

And thus I have done with the first thing I propounded to speak to from this text, viz. the manifest inconveniencies of a sinful and vicious course of life; that it brings no present benefit or advantage to us; that the reflection upon it causeth shame; and that it is fearful and miserable in the last issue and consequence of it. "What fruit had you," &c.

I should now have proceeded to the second part of the text, which represents to us the manifold advantages of an holy and virtuous course of life; ver. 22. "But now being made free from sin, and "become the servants of righteousness, ye have your "fruit unto holiness," there's the present advantage of it; "and the end everlasting life," there's the future reward of it. But this is a large argument, which will require a discourse by itself, and therefore I shall not now enter upon it; but shall only make some reflections upon what hath been said, concerning the miserable issue and consequence of a wicked life impenitently persisted in.

And surely if we firmly believe and seriously consider these things, we have no reason to be fond of any vice; we can take no greater comfort or contentment in a sinful course. If we could for the seeming advantage and short pleasure of some sins, dispense with the temporal mischiefs and inconveniencies of them, which yet I cannot see how any prudent and considerate man could do: if we could conquer shame, and bear the infamy and reproach which attends most sins, and could digest the upbraidings

SERM. CLXV.

braidings of our own conſciences, ſo often as we call them to remembrance, and reflect ſeriouſly upon them; though for the gratifying an importunate inclination, and an impetuous appetite, all the inconveniencies of them might be born withal; yet methinks the very thought of the end and iſſue of a wicked life, that "the end of theſe things is death," that "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh," far greater than we can now deſcribe, or imagine, "ſhall be to every ſoul of man that doth "evil," ſhould over-rule us. Though the violence of an irregular luſt and deſire are able to bear down all other arguments, yet methinks the eternal intereſt of our precious and immortal ſouls ſhould ſtill lye near our hearts, and affect us very ſenſibly. Methinks the conſideration of another world, and of all eternity, and of that diſmal fate which attends impenitent ſinners after this life, and the dreadful hazard of being miſerable for ever, ſhould be more than enough to diſhearten any man from a wicked life, and to bring him to a better mind and courſe.

And if the plain repreſentations of theſe things do not prevail with men to this purpoſe, it is a ſign that either they do not believe theſe things, or elſe that they do not conſider them; one of theſe two muſt be the reaſon why any man, notwithſtanding theſe terrible threatnings of GOD's word, does venture to continue in an evil courſe.

It is vehemently to be ſuſpected, that men do not really believe theſe things, that they are not fully perſuaded that there is another ſtate after this life, in which the righteous GOD "will render to every "man according to his deeds:" and therefore ſo much wickedneſs as we ſee in the lives of men, ſo much infidelity may reaſonably be ſuſpected to lye lurking

lurking in their hearts. They may indeed seemingly profess to believe these things; but he that would know what a man inwardly and firmly believes, should attend rather to his actions, than to his verbal professions: For if any man lives so, as no man that believes the principles of the christian religion in reason can live, there is too much reason to question whether that man doth believe his religion; he may say he does, but there is a far greater evidence in the case than words; the actions of the man are by far the most credible declarations of the inward sense and persuasion of his mind.

Did men firmly and heartily believe that there is a GOD that governs the world, and regards the actions of men, and that "he hath appointed a day "in which he will judge the world in righteousness," and that all mankind shall appear before him in that day, and every action that they have done in their whole lives shall be brought upon the stage, and pass a strict examination and censure, and that those who have made conscience of their duty to GOD and men, and have "lived soberly, righteously, and "godly in this present world," shall be unspeakably and eternally happy in the next; but those who have lived leud and licentious lives, and persisted in an impenitent course, shall be extremely and everlastingly miserable, without pity, and without comfort, and without remedy, and without hope of ever being otherwise; I say, if men were fully and firmly persuaded of these things, it is not credible, it is hardly possible that they should live such profane and impious, such careless and dissolute lives, as we daily see a great part of mankind do.

That man that can be awed from his duty, or tempted to sin by any of the pleasures or terrors of

SERM. CLXV.

this world, that for the preſent enjoyment of his luſts can be contented to venture his ſoul, what greater evidence than this can there be, that this man does not believe the threatnings of the goſpel, and how "fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the "living GOD?" That man that can be willing to undergo an hard ſervice for ſeveral years, that he may be in a way to get an eſtate, and be rich in this world; and yet will not be perſuaded to reſtrain himſelf of his liberty, or to deny his pleaſure, or to check his appetite or luſt, for the greateſt reward that GOD can promiſe, or the ſevereſt puniſhment that he can threaten; can any man reaſonably think, that this man is perſuaded of any ſuch happineſs or miſery after this life, as is plainly revealed in the goſpel, that "verily there is a reward for the righteous, and "verily there is a GOD that judgeth the earth?" For what can he that believes not one ſyllable of the bible, do worſe than this comes to?

A ſtrong and vigorous faith even in temporal caſes, is a powerful principle of action, eſpecially if it be backed and enforced with arguments of fear. He that believes the reality of a thing, and that it is good for him, and that it may be attained, and that if he do attain it, it will make him very happy, and that without it he ſhall be extremely miſerable; ſuch a belief and perſuaſion will put a man upon difficult things, and make him to put forth a vigorous endeavour, and to uſe a mighty induſtry for the obtaining of that, concerning which he is thus perſuaded.

And the faith of the goſpel ought to be ſo much the more powerful, by how much the objects of hope and fear, which it preſents to us, are greater and more conſiderable. Did men fully believe the happineſs

pineſs of heaven, and the torments of hell, and were they as verily perſuaded of the truth of them, as if they were before their eyes, how inſignificant would all the terrors and temptations of ſenſe be to draw them into ſin, and ſeduce them from their duty? SERM. CLXV.

But although it ſeems very ſtrange, and almoſt incredible, that men ſhould believe theſe things, and yet live wicked and impious lives; yet becauſe I have no mind, and GOD knows there's no need to increaſe the number of infidels in this age, I ſhall chuſe rather to impute a great deal of the wickedneſs that is in the world, to the inconſiderateneſs of men, than to their unbelief. I will grant that they do in ſome ſort believe theſe things, or at leaſt that they do not diſbelieve them; and then the great cauſe of mens ruin muſt be, that they do not attend to the conſequence of this belief, and how men ought to live that are thus perſuaded. Men ſtifle their reaſon, and ſuffer themſelves to be hurried away by ſenſe, into the embraces of ſenſual objects and things preſent, but do not conſider what the end of theſe things will be, and what is like to become of them hereafter; for it is not to be imagined, but that man who ſhall calmly conſider with himſelf what ſin is, the ſhortneſs of its pleaſure, and the eternity of its puniſhment, ſhould ſeriouſly reſolve upon a better courſe of life.

And why do we not conſider theſe things, which are of ſo infinite concernment to us? What have we our reaſon for, but to reflect upon ourſelves, and to mind what we do, and wiſely to compare things together, and upon the whole matter to judge what makes moſt for our true and laſting intereſt? to conſider our whole ſelves, our ſouls as well as our bodies; and our whole duration not only in this world, but in the other, not only with regard to time, but

SERM. CLXV.

to eternity? to look before us to the last issue and event of our actions, and to the farthest consequence of them, and to reckon upon what will be hereafter, as well as what is present; and if we suspect or hope or fear, especially if we have good reason to believe a future state after death, in which we shall be happy or miserable to all eternity, according as we manage and behave ourselves in this world, to resolve to make it our greatest design and concernment while we are in this world, so to live and demean ourselves, that we may be of the number of those that shall be accounted worthy to escape that misery, and to obtain that happiness, which will last and continue for ever.

And if men would but apply their minds seriously to the consideration of these things; they could not act so imprudently as they do; they would not live so by chance and without design, taking the pleasure that comes next, and avoiding the present evils which press upon them, without any regard to those that are future, and at a distance, though they be infinitely greater and more considerable: If men could have the patience to debate and argue these matters with themselves, they could not live so preposterously as they do, preferring their bodies before their souls, and the world before GOD, and the things which are temporal before the things that are eternal.

Did men verily and in good earnest believe but half of that to be true, which hath now been declared to you, concerning the miserable state of impenitent sinners in another world, (and I am very sure, that the one half of that which is true concerning that state hath not been told you) I say, did we in any measure believe what hath been so imperfectly represented, "what manner of persons should we all be,

"in

" in all holy converſation and godlineſs, waiting for " and haſtening unto" (that is, making haſte to make the beſt preparation we could for) " the coming of " the day of GOD!"

I will conclude all with our SAVIOUR's exhortation to his diſciples, and to all others; " watch ye " therefore and pray always, that ye may be ac- " counted worthy to eſcape all theſe things, and to " ſtand before the Son of man: To whom, with " the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be all honour and " glory, world without end. Amen."

SERMON CLXVI.

The preſent and future advantage of an holy and virtuous life.

ROM. vi. 21, 22.

What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is death. But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to GOD, *ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life.*

SERM CLXVI.

The fourth ſermon on this text.

I HAVE ſeveral times told you, that the apoſtle in theſe words makes a compariſon between an holy and virtuous, and a ſinful and vicious courſe of life, and ſets before us the manifeſt inconveniencies of the one, and the manifold advantages of the other.

I have finiſhed my diſcourſe upon the firſt part of the compariſon; the manifeſt inconveniencies of a ſinful and vicious courſe. I proceed now to the other part of the compariſon, which was the Second

SERM. CLXVI.

Second thing I propounded to ſpeak to from theſe words, viz. the manifold benefits and advantages of an holy and virtuous courſe; and that upon theſe two accounts.

Firſt, Of the preſent benefit and advantage of it, which the apoſtle here calls fruit, "ye have your fruit "unto holineſs."

Secondly, In reſpect of the future reward of it, "and the end everlaſting life." So that here is a conſiderable earneſt in hand, beſides a mighty recompence afterwards, infinitely beyond the proportion of our beſt actions and ſervices, both in regard of the greatneſs and duration of it, "everlaſting life;" that is, for a few tranſient acts of obedience, a perfect and immutable and endleſs ſtate of happineſs. And theſe two the apoſtle mentions in oppoſition to the inconveniencies and evil conſequences of a wicked and vicious courſe; "what fruit had you then in thoſe "things? &c."

But before I come to ſpeak to theſe two particulars, I ſhall take notice of the deſcription which the apoſtle here makes, of the change from a ſtate of ſin and vice to a ſtate of holineſs and virtue. "But now being made free from ſin, and be-"come the ſervants of GOD;" intimating that the ſtate of ſin is a ſtate of ſervitude and ſlavery, from which repentance and the change which is thereby made does ſet us free; "but now being made "free from ſin." And ſo our SAVIOUR tells us, that "whoſoever committeth ſin is the ſervant of "ſin;" and this is the vileſt and hardeſt ſlavery in the world, becauſe it is the ſervitude of the ſoul, the beſt and nobleſt part of ourſelves; it is the ſubjection of our reaſon, which ought to rule and bear ſway over the inferior faculties, to our ſen-

ſual

ſual appetites and brutiſh paſſions; which is as uncomely a ſight, as to ſee beggars ride on horſe-back, and princes walk on foot. And as inferior perſons, when they are advanced to power, are ſtrangely inſolent and tyrannical towards thoſe that are ſubject to them; ſo the luſts and paſſions of men, when they once get the command of them, are the moſt domineering tyrants in the world; and there is no ſuch ſlave as a man that is ſubject to his appetite and luſt, that is under the power of irregular paſſions and vicious inclinations, which tranſport and hurry him to the vileſt and moſt unreaſonable things. For a wicked man is a ſlave to as many maſters as he hath paſſions and vices; and they are very imperious and exacting, and the more he yields to them, the more they grow upon him, and exerciſe the greater tyranny over him: and being ſubject to ſo many maſters, the poor ſlave is continually divided and diſtracted between their contrary commands and impoſitions; one paſſion hurries him one way, and another as violently drives him another; one luſt commands him upon ſuch a ſervice, and another it may be at the ſame time calls him to another work. His pride and ambition bids him ſpend and lay it out, whilſt his covetouſneſs holds his hand faſt cloſed; ſo that he knows not many times how to diſpoſe of himſelf or what to do, he muſt diſpleaſe ſome of his maſters, and what inclination ſoever he contradicts, he certainly diſpleaſeth himſelf.

And that which aggravates the miſery of his condition is, that he voluntarily ſubmits to this ſervitude. In other caſes men are made ſlaves againſt their wills, and are brought under the force and power of others, whom they are not able to reſiſt: but the ſinner chuſeth this ſervitude, and willingly puts his neck

neck under this yoke. There are few men in the world ſo ſick of their liberty, and ſo weary of their own happineſs, as to chuſe this condition: but the ſinner ſells himſelf, and voluntarily parts with that liberty, which he might keep, and which none could take from him.

And which makes this condition yet more intolerable, he makes himſelf a ſlave to his own ſervants, to thoſe who are born to be ſubject to him, to his own appetites and paſſions; and this certainly is the worſt kind of ſlavery, ſo much worſe than that of mines and gallies, as the ſoul is more noble and excellent than the body.

Men are not uſually ſo ſenſible of the miſery of this kind of ſervitude, becauſe they are govern'd by ſenſe more than reaſon: But according to a true judgment and eſtimation of things, a vicious courſe of life is the ſaddeſt ſlavery of all others. And therefore the goſpel repreſents it as a deſign every way worthy of the Son of GOD, to come down from heaven, and to debaſe himſelf ſo far, as to aſſume our nature, and to ſubmit to the death of the croſs, on purpoſe to reſcue us from this ſlavery, and to aſſert us into "the liberty of the ſons of GOD." And this is the great deſign of the doctrine of the goſpel, to free men from the bondage of their luſts, and to bring them to the ſervice of GOD, "whoſe ſervice is "perfect freedom." And therefore our SAVIOUR tells us, John viii. 31, 32. That "if we continue in "his word," i. e. if we obey his doctrine, and frame our lives according to it, it will make us free; "ye "ſhall know (ſays he) the truth, and the truth ſhall "make you free." And if we obſerve it, the ſcripture delights very much to ſet forth to us the benefits and advantages of the chriſtian religion by the metaphor

phor of liberty and redemption from captivity and ſlavery. Hence our SAVIOUR is often called the redeemer and deliverer, and is ſaid to have "obtained "eternal redemption for us." And the publiſhing of the goſpel is compared to the proclaiming of the year of jubilee among the Jews, when all perſons that would were ſet at liberty. Iſa. lxi. 1, 2. "The Spi- "rit of the LORD is upon me," ſaith the prophet ſpeaking in the perſon of the Meſſiah, "becauſe he "hath anointed me to proclaim liberty to the cap- "tives, and the opening of the priſon to them that "are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the "LORD." And it is probable that upon this account likewiſe the chriſtian doctrine or law is by St. James called "the royal law of liberty."

This is the great deſign of chriſtianity, to ſet men free from the ſlavery of their luſts; and to this end the apoſtle tells us, Tit. ii. 13. that "CHRIST gave "himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all "iniquity, and purify to himſelf a peculiar people, "zealous of good works." And herein the great mercy and compaſſion of GOD towards mankind appeared, in that he ſent his Son to reſcue us from that ſervitude, which we had ſo long groaned under, that "being made free from ſin, we might become the "ſervants of GOD, and the ſervants of righteouſneſs."

And this he hath done not only by the price of his blood, but by the power and purity of his doctrine, and the holy example of his life, and by all thoſe conſiderations which repreſent to us the miſery of our ſinful ſtate, and the infinite danger of continuing in it: and on the other hand, by ſetting before us the advantages of a religious and holy life, and what a bleſſed change we make, when we quit the ſervice of ſin, and become the ſervants of GOD. It

will not only be a mighty present benefit to us, but will make us happy to all eternity; and these are the two considerations which at first I propounded to speak to at this time.

First, The present benefit of an holy and virtuous life, which the apostle here calls fruit; "But now "being made free from sin, and become the ser- "vants of GOD, ye have your fruit unto holiness."

Secondly, The future reward and recompence of it; "and the end everlasting life."

First, Let us consider the present benefit and advantage of an holy and virtuous life, which the apostle here calls fruit. If all things be truly considered, there is no advantage comes to any man by a wicked and vicious course of life. A wicked life is no present advantage; the reflection upon it afterwards is shameful and troublesom; and the end of it miserable. But on the contrary, the advantages of an holy and good life are many and great even in this world, and upon temporal accounts, abstracting from the consideration of a future reward in the world to come.

I shall instance in five or six eminent advantages, which it usually brings to men in this world.

I. It brings great peace and contentment of mind.

II. It is a very fit and proper means to promote our outward temporal interest.

III. It tends to the lengthening our days, and hath frequently the blessing of long life attending upon it.

IV. It gives a man great peace and comfort when he comes to die.

V. After death it transmits a good name and reputation to posterity.

VI. It derives a blessing upon our posterity after us. And these are certainly the greatest blessings

that

that a wise man can aim at, and design to himself in this world. Every one of these taken severally is very considerable; but all of them together complete a man's temporal felicity, and raise it to as high a pitch as is to be expected in this world.

I. A religious and virtuous course of life is the best way to peace and contentment of mind, and does commonly bring it. And to a wise man, that knows how to value the ease and satisfaction of his own mind, there cannot be a greater temptation to religion and virtue, than to consider that it is the best and only way to give rest to his mind. And this is present fruit and ready payment; because it immediately follows, or rather accompanies the discharge of our duty. "The fruit of righteousness is peace," saith the prophet; and the apostle to the Hebrews speaks of "the peaceable fruits of righteousness," meaning that inward peace which a righteous man hath in his own mind.

A man needs not to take pains, or to use many arguments, to satisfy and content his own mind, after he hath done a good action, and to convince himself, that he hath no cause to be troubled for it; for peace and pleasure do naturally spring from it: nay, not only so, but there is an unexpressible kind of pleasure and delight, that flows from the testimony of a good conscience. Let but a man take care to satisfy himself in the doing of his duty, and whatever troubles and storms may be raised from without, all will be clear and calm within: for nothing but guilt can trouble a man's mind, and fright his conscience, and make him uneasy to himself; that indeed will wound his spirit, and sting his very soul, and make him full of fearful and tormenting thoughts. This Cain found after he had committed that crying

SERM. CLXVI.

ſin of murdering his brother. Gen. iv. 6. "The "LORD ſaid unto Cain, why art thou wrath? And "why is thy countenance fallen? His guilt made him full of wrath, and diſcontent filled his mind with vexation, and his countenance with ſhame and confuſion. When a man's conſcience is awakened to a ſenſe of his guilt, it is angry and froward, and harder to be ſtilled than a peeviſh child: but the practice of holineſs and virtue does produce juſt the contrary effects; it fills a man's mind with pleaſure, and makes his countenance chearful.

And this certainly, if it be well conſidered, is no ſmall and contemptible advantage. The peace and tranquillity of our minds is the great thing, which all the philoſophy and wiſdom of the world did always deſign to bring men to, as the very utmoſt happineſs that a wiſe man is capable of in this life; and it is that which no conſiderate man would part with, for all that this world can give him. The greateſt fortune in this world ought to be no temptation to any man in his wits, to ſubmit to perpetual ſickneſs and pain for the gaining of it; and yet there is no diſeaſe in the world, that for the ſharpneſs of it is comparable to the ſting of a guilty mind, and no pleaſure equal to that of innocence and a good conſcience. And this naturally ſprings up in the mind of a good man, where it is not hindred either by a melancholy temper, or by falſe principles in religion, which fill a man with groundleſs fears and jealouſies of the love and favour of GOD towards him; and excepting theſe two caſes, this is the ordinary fruit of an holy and good courſe, which is not interrupted by frequent falling into ſin, and great omiſſions and violations of our duty: for in this caſe the interruptions of our peace and comfort will naturally be anſwerable to the inequality of our obedience.

II. Be-

II. Beſides the preſent and ineſtimable fruit of holineſs, the quiet and ſatisfaction of our own minds; it is likewiſe a proper means to promote our intereſt and happineſs in this world. For as every vice is naturally attended with ſome temporal inconvenience of pain or loſs; ſo there is no grace or virtue, but does apparently conduce to a man's temporal felicity. There are ſome virtues which tend to the health of his body, and the prolonging of his life, as temperance and chaſtity; others tend to riches and plenty, as diligence and induſtry in our callings; others to the ſecure and peaceable enjoyment of what we have, as truth and fidelity, juſtice and honeſty in all our dealings and intercourſe with men. There are other virtues that are apt to oblige mankind to us, and to gain their friendſhip and good will, their aid and aſſiſtance, as kindneſs, and meekneſs, and charity, and a generous diſpoſition to do good to all, as far as we have power and opportunity. In a word, there is no real intereſt of this world, but may ordinarily be as effectually promoted and purſued to as great advantage, by a man that exerciſes himſelf in the practice of all virtue and goodneſs, and uſually to far greater advantage, than by one that is intemperate and debauched, deceitful and diſhoneſt, apt to diſoblige and provoke, ſour and ill-natured to all mankind: for there is none of theſe vices, but is to a man's real hinderance and diſadvantage, in regard of one kind of happineſs or another, which men aim at and propoſe to themſelves in this world.

III. A religious and virtuous courſe of life doth naturally tend to the prolonging of our days, and hath very frequently the bleſſing of health and long life attending upon it. The practice of a great many virtues is a great preſervative of life and health, as the due go-

vernment of our appetites and paſſions, by temperance and chaſtity and meekneſs, which prevent the chief cauſes from within of bodily diſeaſes and diſtempers; the due government of our tongues and converſation in reſpect of others, by juſtice and kindneſs, and abſtaining from wrath and provocation, which are a great ſecurity againſt the dangers of outward violence, according to that of St. Peter, 1 Epiſt. iii. 10. "He that will love life and ſee good days, "let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips "that they ſpeak no guile; let him eſchew evil, "and do good, let him ſeek peace and enſue it."

And beſide the natural tendency of things, there is a ſpecial bleſſing of GOD, which attends good men, and makes "their days long in the land which "the LORD their GOD hath given them."

IV. There is nothing gives a man ſo much comfort when he comes to die, as the reflection upon an holy and good life: and then ſurely above all other times comfort is moſt valuable, becauſe our frail and infirm nature doth then ſtand moſt in need of it. Then uſually mens hearts are faint and their ſpirits low, and every thing is apt to deject and trouble them; ſo that we had need to provide ourſelves of ſome excellent cordial againſt that time; and there is no comfort like to that of a clear conſcience, and of an innocent and uſeful life. This will revive and raiſe a man's ſpirits under all the infirmities of his body, becauſe it gives a man good hopes concerning his eternal ſtate, and the hopes of that are apt to fill a man with "joy unſpeakable and full of glory."

The difference between good and bad men is never ſo remarkable in this world, as when they are upon their death-bed. This the ſcripture obſerves to us, Pſal. xxxvii. 37. "Mark the perfect man, and be-

"hold

" hold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

With what triumph and exultation doth the bleſſed apoſtle St. Paul, upon the review of his life, diſcourſe concerning his death and diſſolution? 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. " I am now ready, ſays he, to be offered " up, and the time of my departure is at hand: " I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my " courſe, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is " laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the " LORD, the righteous judge, will give me at that " day." What would not any of us do to be thus affected when we come to leave the world, and to be able to bear the thoughts of death and eternity with ſo quiet and well ſatisfied a mind! Why, let us but endeavour to live holy lives, and to be uſeful and ſerviceable to GOD in our generation, as this holy apoſtle was, and we ſhall have the ſame ground of joy and triumph which he had. For this is the proper and genuine effect of virtue and goodneſs; " the " work of righteouſneſs is peace, and the effect of " righteouſneſs quietneſs and aſſurance for ever." All the good actions that we do in this life are ſo many ſeeds of comfort ſown in our own conſciences, which will ſpring up one time or other, but eſpecially in the approaches of death, when we come to take a ſerious review of our lives; for then mens conſciences uſe to deal plainly and impartially with them, and to tell them the truth; and if at that time more eſpecially " our hearts condemn us not, then may we " have comfort and confidence towards GOD."

V. An holy and virtuous life doth tranſmit a good name and reputation to poſterity. And this Solomon hath determined to be a much greater happineſs, than for a man to leave a great eſtate behind him: a good name, ſays he, " is rather to be choſen than

" great

SERM. CLXVI.

" great riches." Pious and virtuous men do commonly gain to themſelves a good eſteem and reputation in this world, while they are in it; but the virtues of good men are not always ſo bright and ſhining, as to meet with that reſpect and acknowledgment which is due to them in this world. Many times they are much clouded by the infirmities and paſſions which attend them, and are ſhadowed by ſome affected ſingularities and moroſities, which thoſe which have lived more retired from the world are more liable to. Beſides that the envy of others, who are not ſo good as they, lies heavy upon them, and does depreſs them. For bad men are very apt to miſinterpret the beſt actions of the good, and put falſe colours upon them, and when they have nothing elſe to object againſt them, to charge them with hypocriſy and inſincerity; an objection as hard to be anſwered, as it is to be made good, unleſs we could ſee into the hearts of men.

But when good men are dead and gone, and the bright and ſhining example of their virtues is at a convenient diſtance, and does not gall and upbraid others, then envy ceaſeth, and every man is then content to give a good man his due praiſe, and his friends and poſterity may then quietly enjoy the comfort of his reputation, which is ſome ſort of bleſſing to him that is gone. This difference Solomon obſerves to us between good and bad men; " the memory of the juſt is bleſſed, or well ſpoken " of: but the name of the wicked ſhall rot."

VI. And laſtly, religion and virtue do derive a bleſſing upon our poſterity after us. " Oh, that " there were ſuch an heart in them," ſaith Moſes concerning the people of Iſrael, " that they would " fear me, and keep all my commandments always,

" that

" that it might be well with them and with their " children for ever!" And to this purpose there are many promises in scripture of GOD's " blessing the " posterity of the righteous," and " his shewing " mercy to thousands of the children of them that " love him, and keep his commandments."

And this is a great motive to obedience, and touches upon that natural affection which men bear to their children; so that if we have any regard to them, or concernment for their happiness, we ought to be very careful of our duty, and afraid to offend GOD; because according as we demean ourselves towards him, we entail a lasting blessing or a great curse upon our children; by so many and so strong bonds hath GOD tied our duty upon us, that if we either desire our own happiness, or the happiness of those that are dearest to us, and part of ourselves, we must " fear GOD and keep his commandments."

And thus I have briefly represented to you some of the chief benefits and advantages which an holy and virtuous life does commonly bring to men in this world, which is the first encouragement mentioned in the text; " Ye have your fruit unto holiness."

Before I proceed to the second, I shall only just take notice, by way of application, of what has been said on this argument.

1. That it is a great encouragement to well-doing, to consider that ordinarily piety and goodness are no hindrance to a man's temporal felicity, but very frequently great promoters of it; so that excepting only the case of persecution for religion, I think I may safely challenge any man, to shew me how the practice of any part or duty of religion, how the exercise of any grace or virtue is to the prejudice of a man's temporal interest, or does debar him of any

SERM. CLXVI.

true pleaſure, or hinder him of any real advantage, which a prudent and conſiderate man would think fit to chuſe. And as for perſecution and ſufferings for religion, GOD can reward us for them, if he pleaſe, in this world; and we have all the aſſurance that we can deſire, that he will do it abundantly in the next.

2. The hope of long life, and eſpecially of a quiet and comfortable death, ſhould be a great encouragement to an holy and virtuous life. He that lives well, takes the beſt courſe to live long, and lays in for an happy old age, free from the diſeaſes and infirmities which are naturally procured by a vicious youth, and likewiſe free from the guilt and galling remembrance of a wicked life. And there is no condition, which we can fall into in this world, that does ſo clearly diſcover the difference between a good and bad man, as a death-bed: for then the good man begins moſt ſenſibly to enjoy the comforts of well-doing, and the ſinner to taſte the bitter fruits of ſin. What a wide difference is then to be ſeen, between the hopes and fears of theſe two ſorts of perſons! and ſurely next to the actual poſſeſſion of bleſſedneſs, the good hopes and comfortable proſpect of it are the greateſt happineſs; and next to the actual ſenſe of pain, the fear of ſuffering is the greateſt torment.

Though there were nothing beyond this life to be expected, yet if men were ſure to be poſſeſſed with theſe delightful or troubleſom paſſions when they come to die, no man that wiſely conſiders things would, for all the pleaſures of ſin, forfeit the comfort of a righteous ſoul, leaving this world full of the hope of immortality; and endure the vexation and anguiſh of a guilty conſcience, and that infinite terror and amazement which ſo frequently poſſeſſeth the ſoul of a dying ſinner.

SERM. CLXVI.

3. If there be any ſpark of a generous mind in us, it ſhould animate us to do well, that we may be well ſpoken of when we are gone off the ſtage, and may tranſmit a grateful memory of our lives to thoſe that ſhall be after us. I proceed now to the

Second thing I propoſed, as the great advantage indeed, viz. the glorious reward of a holy and virtuous life in another world, which is here called everlaſting life; "and the end everlaſting life:" by which the apoſtle intends to expreſs to us, both the happineſs of our future ſtate, and the way and means whereby we are prepared and made meet to be made partakers of it; and that is by the conſtant and ſincere endeavours of an holy and good life. For it is they only that "have their fruit unto holineſs," whoſe end ſhall be "everlaſting life." I ſhall ſpeak briefly to theſe two, and ſo conclude my diſcourſe upon this text.

I. The happineſs of our future ſtate, which is here expreſs'd by the name of "everlaſting life;" in very few words, but ſuch as are of wonderful weight and ſignificancy: For they import the excellency of this ſtate, and the eternity of it. And who is ſufficient to ſpeak to either of theſe arguments? Both of them are too big to enter now into the heart of man, too vaſt and boundleſs to be comprehended by human underſtanding, and too unwieldy to be managed by the tongue of men and angels, anſwerable to the unſpeakable greatneſs and glory of them. And if I were able to declare them unto you, as they deſerved, you would not be able to hear me. And therefore I ſhall chuſe to ſay but little upon an argument, of which I can never ſay enough, and ſhall very briefly conſider thoſe two things which are comprehended in that ſhort deſcription, which the text gives

SERM. CLXVI.

us of future happineſs, by the name of "everlaſting life," viz. the excellency of this ſtate, and the eternity of it.

1. The excellency of it, which is here repreſented to us under the notion of life, the moſt deſirable of all other things, becauſe it is the foundation of all other enjoyments whatſoever. Barely to be in being, and to be ſenſible that we are ſo, is but a dry notion of life. The true notion of life is to be well and to be happy, *vivere eſt benè valere*. They who are in the moſt miſerable condition that can be imagined, are in being, and ſenſible alſo that they are miſerable. But this kind of life is ſo far from coming under the true notion of life, that the ſcripture calls it "the ſecond death." Rev. xxi. 8. It is there ſaid, that "the wicked ſhall have their part in the lake "that burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the "ſecond death." And chap. xx. ver. 6. "Bleſſed "and holy is he, that hath part in the firſt reſur-"rection, on ſuch the ſecond death ſhall have no "power." So that a ſtate of mere miſery and torment is not life but death; nay, the ſcripture will not allow the life of a wicked man in this world to be true life, but ſpeaks of him as dead. Eph. ii. 1. ſpeaking of the ſinners among the Gentiles, "You, "ſaith the apoſtle, hath he quickened, who were "dead in treſpaſſes and ſins." And which is more yet, the ſcripture calls a life of ſinful pleaſures (which men eſteem the only happineſs of this world) the ſcripture, I ſay, calls this a death, 1 Tim. v. 6. "She "that liveth in pleaſures, is dead whilſt ſhe liveth." A lewd and unprofitable life, which ſerves to no good end and purpoſe, is a death rather than a life. Nay, that decaying and dying life which we now live in this world, and which is allayed by the mixture of

ſo

so many infirmities and pains, of so much trouble and sorrow; I say, that even this sort of life, for all that we are so fondly in love with it, does hardly deserve the name of life. But the life of the world to come, of which we now speak, this is life indeed; to do those things which we were made for, to serve the true ends of our being, and to enjoy the comfort and reward of so doing, this is the true notion of life; and whatever is less than this, is death, or a degree of it, and approach towards it. And therefore very well may heaven and happiness be described by the notion of life, because "truly to live" and "to "be happy" are words that signify the same thing.

But what kind of life this is, I can no more describe to you in the particularities of it, than Columbus could have described the particular manners and customs of the people of America, before he or any other person in these parts of the world had seen it or been there. But this I can say of it in general, and that from the infallible testimony of the great Creator and glorious inhabitants of that blessed place, that it is a state of pure pleasure and unmingled joys, of pleasures more manly, more spiritual, and more refined, than any of the delights of sense, consisting in the enlargement of our minds and knowledge to a greater degree, and in the perfect exercise of love and friendship, in the conversation of the best and wisest company, free from self-interest, and all those unsociable passions of envy and jealousy, of malice and ill-will, which spoil the comfort of all conversation in this world; and, in a word, free from all other passion or design, but an ardent and almost equal desire to contribute all, that by all means possible they can, to the mutual happiness of one another: For charity reigns in heaven, and is the brightest

grace

SERM. CLXVI.

grace and virtue in the firmament of glory, far outſhining all other; as St. Paul, who had himſelf been taken up into the third heaven, does expreſly declare to us.

Farther yet, this bleſſed ſtate conſiſts more particularly in theſe two things: In having our bodies raiſed and refined to a far greater purity and perfection, than ever they had in this world; and in the conſequent happineſs of the whole man, ſoul and body, ſo ſtrictly and firmly united as never to be parted again, and ſo equally match'd as to be no trouble or impediment to one another.

(1.) In having our bodies raiſed and refined to a far greater purity and perfection, than ever they had in this world. Our bodies, as they are now, are unequally tempered, and in a perpetual flux and change, continually tending to corruption, becauſe made up of ſuch contrary principles and qualities, as by their perpetual conflict are always at work, conſpiring the ruin and diſſolution of them; but when they are raiſed again, they ſhall be ſo tempered and ſo refined, as to be free from all thoſe deſtructive qualities, which do now threaten their change and diſſolution: and though they ſhall ſtill conſiſt of matter, yet they ſhall be purified to that degree, as to partake of the immortality of our ſouls, to which they ſhall be united, and to be of equal duration with them. So the ſcripture tells us, 1 Cor. xv. 52, 53. "That our dead "bodies ſhall be raiſed incorruptible: for this cor- "ruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mor- "tal muſt put on immortality."

Our bodies when they are laid down in the grave are vile carcaſes, but they ſhall be raiſed again beautiful and glorious, and as different from what they were before, as the heavenly manſions in which they

are

are to reſide for ever are from that dark cell of the grave out of which they are raiſed; and ſhall then be endowed with ſuch a life, and ſtrength, and vigour, as to be able without any change or decay to abide and continue for ever in the ſame ſtate.

Our bodies in this world are groſs fleſh and blood, liable to be affected with natural and ſenſual pleaſures, and to be afflicted with natural pains and diſeaſes, to be preſs'd with the natural neceſſities of hunger and thirſt, and obnoxious to all thoſe changes and accidents to which all natural things are ſubject: But "they ſhall be raiſed ſpiritual bodies," pure and refined from all the dregs of matter; they ſhall not hunger, nor thirſt, nor be diſeaſed, or in pain any more.

"Theſe houſes of clay, whoſe foundation is in "the duſt," are continually decaying, and therefore ſtand in need of continual reparation by food and phyſick: but "our houſe which is from heaven" (as the apoſtle calls it) ſhall be of ſuch laſting and durable materials, as not only time, but even eternity itſelf, ſhall make no impreſſion upon it, or cauſe the leaſt decay in it. "They (ſays our bleſſed SAVIOUR) who ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain "that world, and the reſurrection from the dead, "cannot die any more: but ſhall be like the angels, "and are the children of GOD," i. e. ſhall in ſome degree partake of the felicity and immortality of GOD himſelf, "who is always the ſame, and whoſe "years fail not." Nay, the apoſtle expreſly tells us, that our bodies after the reſurrection ſhall be ſpiritual bodies, ſo that we ſhall then be as it were all ſpirit, and our bodies ſhall be ſo raiſed and refined, that they ſhall be no clog or impediment to the operation of our ſouls. And it muſt needs be a great comfort to us whilſt we are in this world, to live in the

SERM. CLXVI.

the hopes of ſo happy and glorious a change; when we conſider how our bodies do now oppreſs our ſpirits, and what a melancholy and dead weight they are upon them, how grievous an incumbrance and trouble and temptation they are for the moſt part to us in this mortal ſtate.

(2.) The bleſſedneſs of this ſtate conſiſts likewiſe in the conſequent happineſs of the whole man, ſoul and body, ſo ſtrictly and firmly united as never to be parted again, and ſo equally matched as to be no trouble and impediment to one another.

In this world the ſoul and body are for the moſt part very unequally yoked, ſo that the ſoul is not only darkened by the groſs fumes and clouds which riſe from the body, but loaded and oppreſs'd by the dull weight of it, which it very heavily lugs on and draws after it; and the ſoul likewiſe, and the vicious inclinations and the irregular paſſions of it, have many times an ill influence upon the body and the humours of it. But in the next world they ſhall both be purified, the one from ſin, and the other from frailty and corruption, and both be admitted to the bleſſed ſight and enjoyment of the ever-bleſſed GOD.

But the conſideration of this (as I ſaid before) is too big for our narrow apprehenſions in this mortal ſtate, and an argument not fit to be treated of by ſuch children, as the wiſeſt of men are in this world; and whenever we attempt to ſpeak of it, we do but liſp like children, and underſtand like children, and reaſon like children about it. "That which is im-"perfect muſt be done away," and our ſouls muſt be raiſed to a greater perfection, and our underſtandings filled with a ſtronger and ſteadier light, before we can be fit to engage in ſo profound a contemplation. We muſt firſt have been in heaven,

and

and poſſeſs'd of that felicity and glory which is there to be enjoyed, before we can either ſpeak or think of it in any meaſure as it deſerves. In the mean time, whenever we ſet about it, we ſhall find our faculties oppreſs'd and dazzled with the weight and ſplendor of ſo great and glorious an argument; like St. Paul, who, when "he was caught up into paradiſe," ſaw and heard thoſe things, which, when he came down again into this world, he was not able to expreſs, and which it was not poſſible for the tongue of man to utter.

So that in diſcourſing of the ſtate of the bleſſed, we muſt content ourſelves with what the ſcripture hath revealed in general concerning it; that it is a ſtate of perfect freedom from all thoſe infirmities and imperfections, thoſe evils and miſeries, thoſe ſins and temptations which we are liable to in this world. So St. John deſcribes the glory and felicity of that ſtate, as they were in viſions repreſented to him, Rev. xxi. 2, 3, 4. "And I, John, ſaw the holy city, the new "Jeruſalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her "huſband. And I heard a great voice out of hea"ven, ſaying, Behold! the tabernacle of GOD is "with men, and he will dwell with them, and they "ſhall be his people, and GOD himſelf ſhall be with "them, and be their GOD. And GOD ſhall wipe "away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be "no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, nei"ther ſhall there be any more pain: for the former "things are paſſed away;" that is, all thoſe evils which we ſaw or ſuffered in this world, ſhall for ever vaniſh and diſappear, and, which is the great privilege and felicity of all, that there ſhall no ſin be there, ver. 27. "There ſhall in no wiſe enter into it "any thing that defileth," and conſequently there

ſhall be no miſery and curſe there. So we read, chap. xxii. 3, 4. "And there ſhall be no more curſe; "but the throne of GOD and of the Lamb ſhall be "in it, and his ſervant ſhall ſerve him, and they "ſhall ſee his face." In which laſt words our employment and our happineſs are expreſs'd; but what in particular our employment ſhall be, and wherein it ſhall conſiſt, is impoſſible now to deſcribe; it is ſufficient to know in the general, that our employment ſhall be our unſpeakable pleaſure, and every way ſuitable to the glory and happineſs of that ſtate, and as much above the nobleſt and moſt delightful employments of this world, as the perfection of our bodies, and the power of our ſouls, ſhall then be above what they are now in this world.

For there is no doubt, but that he who made us, and endued our ſouls with a deſire of immortality, and ſo large a capacity of happineſs, does underſtand very well by what way and means to make us happy, and hath in readineſs proper exerciſes and employments for that ſtate, and every way more fitted to make us happy, than any condition or employment in this world is ſuitable to a temporal happineſs: employments that are ſuitable to "the ſpirits "of juſt men made perfect," united to bodies purified and refined almoſt to the condition of ſpirits; employments which we ſhall be ſo far from being weary of, that they ſhall miniſter to us a new and freſh delight to all eternity; and this perhaps, not ſo much from the variety, as from the perpetual and growing pleaſure of them.

It is ſufficient for us to know this in the general, and to truſt the infinite power and wiſdom and goodneſs of GOD, for the particular manner and circumſtances of our happineſs; not doubting but that he,

who is the eternal and inexhauſtible ſpring and fountain of all happineſs, can and will derive and convey ſuch a ſhare of it to every one of us as he thinks fit, and in ſuch ways as he, who beſt underſtands it, is beſt able to find out.

In a word, the happineſs of the next life ſhall be ſuch as is worthy of the great King of the world to beſtow upon his faithful ſervants, and ſuch as is infinitely beyond the juſt reward of their beſt ſervices; it is "to ſee GOD," i. e. to contemplate and love the beſt and moſt perfect of beings, and "to be for "ever with the LORD, in whoſe preſence is fulneſs "of joy, and at whoſe right hand there are plea-"ſures for evermore."

I will ſay no more upon this argument, leſt I ſhould ſay leſs, and becauſe whoever ventures to wade far into it, will ſoon find himſelf out of his depth, and in danger to be ſwallowed up and loſt in that great abyſs, which is not to be fathomed by the ſhallow faculties of mortal men.

I ſhall therefore only mention the

2. Thing I propoſed to ſpeak to, viz. the eternity of this happineſs; "and the end everlaſting "life:" by which the apoſtle intends to expreſs the utmoſt perfection, but not the final period of the happineſs of good men in another world. For to a perfect ſtate of happineſs theſe two conditions are requiſite, that it be immutable, and that it be interminable, that it can neither admit of a change nor of an end. And this is all that I ſhall ſay of it, it being impoſſible to ſay any thing that is more intelligible and plain, concerning that which is infinite, than that it is ſo. I ſhould now have proceeded to the

II. Thing I propoſed, viz. by what way and means we may be prepared, and made meet to be

made partakers of this happineſs; and that is (as I have told you all along) by the conſtant and ſincere endeavour of an holy and good life; for the text ſuppoſeth that they only who are "made free from "ſin," and "become the ſervants of GOD," and who "have their fruit unto holineſs," are they whoſe end ſhall be everlaſting life. But this is an argument which I have had ſo frequent occaſion to ſpeak to, that I ſhall not now meddle with it. All that I ſhall do more at preſent ſhall be to make an inference or two from what hath been ſaid upon this argument.

I. The conſideration of the happy ſtate of good men in another world, cannot but be a great comfort and ſupport to good men under all the evils and ſufferings of this preſent life. Hope is a great cordial to the minds of men, eſpecially when the thing hoped for does ſo vaſtly outweigh the preſent grievance and trouble. The holy ſcriptures, which reveal to us the happineſs of our future ſtate, do likewiſe aſſure us that there is no compariſon between the afflictions and ſufferings of good men in this world, and the reward of them in the other. "I reckon (ſaith St. "Paul) Rom. viii. 8. that the ſufferings of this pre-"ſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the "glory that ſhall be revealed in us."

Particularly the conſideration of that glorious change which ſhall be made in our bodies at the reſurrection, ought to be a great comfort to us under all the pains and diſeaſes which they are now liable to, and even againſt death itſelf. One of the greateſt burdens of human nature, is the frailty and infirmity of our bodies, the neceſſities which they are frequently preſs'd withal, the diſeaſes and pains to which they are liable, and "the fear of death," by reaſon

SERM. CLXVI.

reaſon whereof a great part of mankind are "ſubject "to bondage;" againſt all which this is an everlaſting ſpring of conſolation to us, that the time is coming when we ſhall have other ſort of bodies, freed from that burden of corruption which we now groan under, and from all thoſe miſeries and inconveniencies which fleſh and blood are now ſubject to. For the time will come, when "theſe vile bodies," which we now wear, "ſhall be changed, and faſhioned like "to the glorious body of the Son of GOD;" and when they ſhall be raiſed at the laſt day, they ſhall not be raiſed ſuch as we laid them down, vile and corruptible, but immortal and incorruptible: for the ſame power which hath raiſed them up to life, ſhall likewiſe change them, and put a glory upon them like to that of the glorified body of our LORD; and when this glorious change is made, "when this cor-"ruptible hath put on incorruption, and this mortal "hath put on immortality, then ſhall come to paſs "the ſaying that is written, death is ſwallowed up "in victory;" and when this laſt enemy is perfectly ſubdued, we ſhall be ſet above all the frailties and dangers, all the temptations and ſufferings of this mortal ſtate; there will then be no "fleſhly luſts" and brutiſh paſſions "to war againſt the ſoul;" no "law in our members" to riſe up in rebellion againſt "the law of our minds;" no diſeaſes to torment us, no danger of death to terrify us; all the motions and paſſions of our outward man ſhall then be perfectly ſubject to the reaſon of our minds, and our bodies ſhall partake of the immortality of our ſouls. How ſhould this conſideration bear us up under all the evils of life and the fears of death, that the reſurrection will be a perfect cure of all our infirmities and diſeaſes, and an effectual remedy of all the evils

that

that we now labour under; and that it is but a very little while that we ſhall be troubled with theſe frail, and mortal, and vile bodies, which ſhall ſhortly be laid in the duſt, and when they are raiſed again, ſhall become ſpiritual, incorruptible, and glorious.

And if our bodies ſhall undergo ſo happy a change, what happineſs may we imagine ſhall then be conferred upon our ſouls, that ſo much better and nobler part of ourſelves! as the apoſtle reaſons in another caſe, "Doth GOD take care of oxen?" Hath he this conſideration of our bodies, which are but the brutiſh part of the man? What regard will he then have to his own image, that ſpark of divinity which is for ever to reſide in theſe bodies? If upon the account of our ſouls, and for their ſakes, our bodies ſhall become incorruptible, ſpiritual and glorious; then certainly our ſouls ſhall be endued with far more excellent and divine qualities: if our bodies ſhall in ſome degree partake of the perfection of our ſouls in their ſpiritual and immortal nature; to what a pitch of perfection ſhall our ſouls be raiſed and advanced! even to an equality with angels, and to ſome kind of participation of the divine nature and perfection, ſo far as a creature is capable of them.

II. The compariſon which is here in the text, and which I have largely explained, between the manifeſt inconveniencies of a ſinful and vicious courſe, and the manifold advantages of an holy and virtuous life, is a plain direction to us which of theſe two to chuſe. So that I may make the ſame appeal that Moſes does, after that he had at large declared the bleſſings promiſed to the obedience of GOD's laws, and the curſe denounced againſt the violation and tranſgreſſion of them, Deut. xxx. 19. "I call heaven and earth to record againſt you this day, that

"I have

" I have ſet before you life and death, bleſſing and " curſing; therefore chuſe life," that you may be happy in life and death, and after death to all eternity. I know every one is ready to chuſe happineſs, and to ſay with Balaam, " Let me die the death of " the righteous, and let my latter end be like his :" but if we do in good earneſt deſire the end, we muſt take the way that leads to it; we muſt " become " the ſervants of GOD, and have our fruit unto ho- " lineſs," if ever we expect, that " the end ſhall " be everlaſting life."

SERMON CLXVII.

The nature and neceſſity of holy reſolution.

JOB xxxiv. 31, 32.

Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto GOD, *I have born chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more: That which I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

SERM. CLXVII. The firſt ſermon on this text.

THESE words are the words of Elihu, one of Job's friends, and the only one who is not reproved for his diſcourſe with Job, and who was probably the author of this ancient and moſt eloquent hiſtory of the ſufferings and patience of Job, and of the end which the LORD made with him; and they contain in them a deſcription of the temper and behaviour of a true penitent. " Surely " it is meet, &c."

In which words we have the two eſſential parts of a true repentance, Firſt,

Firſt, An humble acknowledgment and confeſſion of our ſins to GOD, "Surely it is meet to be ſaid "unto GOD, I have born chaſtiſement."

Secondly, A firm purpoſe and reſolution of amendment and forſaking of ſin for the future, "I "will not offend any more; if I have done iniqui- "ty, I will do no more."

Firſt, An humble acknowledgment and confeſſion of our ſins to GOD; "Surely it is meet to be ſaid "unto GOD, I have born chaſtiſement," that is, have ſinned and been juſtly puniſhed for it, and am now convinced of the evil of ſin, and reſolved to leave it; "I have born chaſtiſement, I will offend "no more."

Of this firſt part of repentance, viz. an humble confeſſion of our ſins to GOD, with great ſhame and ſorrow for them, and a thorough conviction of the evil and danger of a ſinful courſe, I have already treated at large. In theſe repentance muſt begin, but it muſt not end in them: for a penitent confeſſion of our ſins to GOD, and a conviction of the evil of them, ſignifies nothing, unleſs it brings us to a reſolution of amendment, that is, of leaving our ſins, and betaking ourſelves to a better courſe. And this I intend, by GOD's aſſiſtance, to ſpeak to now, as being the

Second part of a true repentance here deſcribed in the text, viz. A firm purpoſe and reſolution of amendment and forſaking of ſin for the future; and to expreſs it the more ſtrongly and emphatically, and to ſhew the firmneſs of the reſolution, it is repeated again, "I will not offend any more;" and then in the next verſe, "I have done iniquity, I will "do no more." And this is ſo neceſſary a part of repentance, that herein the very eſſence and formal

nature

nature of repentance does conſiſt, viz. in the firm and ſincere purpoſe and reſolution of a better courſe.

In the handling of this argument, I ſhall do theſe ſix things.

I. I ſhall ſhew what reſolution is in general.

II. What is the ſpecial object of this kind of reſolution.

III. What is implied in a ſincere reſolution of leaving our ſins and returning to GOD.

IV. I ſhall ſhew that in this reſolution of amendment, the very eſſence and formal nature of repentance does conſiſt.

V. I ſhall offer ſome conſiderations to convince men, both of the neceſſity and fitneſs of this reſolution, and of keeping ſtedfaſtly to it. "Surely it is "meet to be ſaid unto GOD, I will not offend "any more."

VI. I ſhall add ſome brief directions concerning the managing and maintaining of this holy and neceſſary reſolution.

I. What reſolution in general is. It is a fix'd determination of the will about any thing, either to do it, or not to do it, as upon due deliberation we have judged and concluded it to be neceſſary or convenient to be done, or not to be done by us: and this ſuppoſeth three things.

1. Reſolution ſuppoſeth a precedent deliberation of the mind about the thing to be reſolved up. For no prudent man does determine or reſolve upon any thing, till he have conſidered the thing, and weighed it well with himſelf, and have fully debated the neceſſity and expedience of it; what advantage he ſhall have by the doing of it, and what danger and inconvenience will certainly or very probably redound to him by the neglect and omiſſion of it. For peremptorily

remptorily to determine and reſolve upon any thing, before a man have done this, is not properly reſolution, but precipitancy and raſhneſs.

2. Reſolution ſuppoſeth ſome judgment paſs'd upon the thing, after a man hath thus deliberated about it; that he is ſatisfied in his mind one way or other concerning it, that his underſtanding is convinced either that it is neceſſary and convenient for him to do it, or that it is not; and this is ſometimes called reſolution, but is not that reſolution which immediately determines a man to action. This judgment of the neceſſity and fitneſs of the thing is not the reſolution of the will, but of the underſtanding; for it does not ſignify that a man hath fully determined to do the thing, but that he hath determined with himſelf that it is reaſonable to be done, and that he is no longer in doubt and ſuſpence whether it be beſt for him to do it or not, but is in his mind reſolved and ſatisfied one way or other. And theſe are two very different things; to be reſolved in one's judgment, that is, to be convinced that a thing is fit and neceſſary to be done, and to be reſolved to ſet upon the doing of it; for many men are thus convinced of the fitneſs and neceſſity of the thing, who yet have not the heart, cannot bring themſelves to a firm and fixed reſolution to ſet upon the doing of it. So that an act of the judgment, muſt go before the reſolution of the will: for as he is raſh that reſolves to do a thing before he hath deliberated about it; ſo he is blind and wilful that reſolves to do a thing before his judgment be ſatisfied, whether it be beſt for him to do it or not.

3. If the matter be of conſiderable moment and conſequence, reſolution ſuppoſeth ſome motion of the affections; which is a kind of biaſs upon the will,

will, a certain propenſion and inclination that a man feels in himſelf, either urging him to do a thing, or withdrawing him from it. Deliberation and judgment, they direct a man what to do, or leave undone; the affections excite and quicken a man to take ſome reſolution in the matter, that is, to do ſuitably to the judgment his mind hath paſs'd upon the thing. For inſtance; a great ſinner reflects upon his life, and conſiders what he hath done, what the courſe is that he lives in, and what the iſſue and conſequence of it will probably or certainly be, whether it will make him happy or miſerable in the concluſion; and debating the matter calmly and ſoberly with himſelf, he is ſatisfied and convinced of the evil and danger of a wicked life, and conſequently that it is beſt for him to reſolve upon a better courſe, that is, to repent. Now theſe thoughts muſt needs awaken in him fearful apprehenſions of the wrath of Almighty GOD, which is due to him for his ſins and hangs over him, and which he is every moment in danger of, if he goes on in his evil courſe. Theſe thoughts are apt likewiſe to fill him with ſhame and confuſion, at the remembrance of his horrible ingratitude to GOD his maker, his beſt friend and greateſt benefactor, and of his deſperate folly in provoking omnipotent juſtice againſt himſelf; whereupon he is heartily grieved and troubled for what he hath done; and theſe affections of fear and ſhame and ſorrow being once up, they come with great violence upon the will, and urge the man to a ſpeedy reſolution of changing his courſe, and leaving the way he is in, which he is fully convinced is ſo evil and dangerous; and of betaking himſelf to another courſe, which he is fully ſatisfied will be much more for his ſafety and advantage.

SER. CLXVII.

SERM. CLXVII.

So that reſolution in general, is a fix'd determination of the will; that is, ſuch a determination as is not only for the preſent free from all wavering and doubting, but ſuch as cannot prudently be altered, ſo long as reaſon remains. For the man who upon full deliberation and conviction of his mind reſolves upon any thing, cannot without the imputation of fickleneſs and inconſtancy quit that reſolution, ſo long as he hath the ſame reaſon which he had when he took it up, and is ſtill ſatisfied that the reaſon is good. For inſtance; The man who hath taken up a reſolution to be ſober, becauſe of the uglineſs and unreaſonableneſs of drunkenneſs, and the temporal inconveniencies and eternal damnation which that ſin expoſeth a man to; if theſe reaſons be true and good, can never prudently alter the reſolution which he hath taken, and return to that ſin again.

II. Let us conſider what is the ſpecial object or matter of this reſolution, wherein the formal nature of repentance does conſiſt, what it is that a man when he repents reſolves upon; and that I told you is to leave his ſin, and to return to GOD and his duty; and this is the reſolution which the penitent here deſcribed in the text takes up, "I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." He reſolves againſt all known ſin, "I will not offend any more;" and if through ignorance he had ſinned and done contrary to his duty, he deſires to be better inſtructed, that he may not offend again in the like kind, "That which I ſee ſee not, teach thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do no more."

So that the true penitent reſolves upon theſe two things.

1. To forſake his ſin. And

2. To return to GOD and his duty.

1. To

1. To forſake his ſin: and this implies the quitting of his ſinful courſe whatever it had been; and that not only by abſtaining from the outward act and practice of every ſin, but by endeavouring to crucify and ſubdue the inward affection and inclination to it.

And it implies farther, the utter forſaking of ſin; for repentance is not only a reſolution to abſtain from ſin for the preſent, but never to return to it again. Thus Ephraim, when he repented of his idolatry, he utterly renounced it, ſaying, "What have I to do "any more with idols?" Hoſ. xiv. 8. He that truly repents, is reſolved to break off his ſinful courſe, and to abandon thoſe luſts and vices which he was formerly addicted to, and lived in.

2. The true penitent reſolves likewiſe to return to God and his duty: he does not ſtay in the negative part of religion, he does not only reſolve not to commit any ſin, but not to neglect or omit any thing that he knows to be his duty; and if he has been ignorant of any part of his duty, he is willing to know it, that he may do it; he is not only determined to forſake his ſin, which will make him miſerable, but to return to God, who alone can make him happy: he is now reſolved to love God, and to ſerve him as much as he hated and diſhonoured him before; and will now be as diligent to perform and practiſe all the duties and parts of religion, as he was negligent of them before, and as ready to do all the good he can to all men in any kind, as he was careleſs of theſe things before: theſe in general are the things which a true penitent reſolves upon. I proceed to the

III. Thing I propoſed to conſider, namely what is implied in a ſincere reſolution of leaving our ſins,

and

and returning to God and our duty. And this holy reſolution, if it be thorough and ſincere, does imply in it theſe three things.

1. That it be univerſal.

2. That it be a reſolution of the means as well as of the end.

3. That it preſently comes to effect, and be ſpeedily and without delay put in execution.

1. A ſincere reſolution of amendment muſt be univerſal: a reſolution to forſake all ſin, and to return to our whole duty, and every part of it; ſuch a reſolution as that of holy David, "to hate every falſe way, "and to have reſpect to all God's commandments."

This reſolution muſt be univerſal in reſpect of the whole man, and with regard to all our actions. In reſpect of the whole man; for we muſt reſolve not only to abſtain from the outward action of ſin, but this reſolution muſt have it's effect upon our inward man, and reach our very hearts and thoughts; it muſt reſtrain our inclinations, and "mortify our luſts and cor-"rupt affections, and renew us in the very ſpirit of "our minds," as the apoſtle expreſſes it.

And it muſt be univerſal, in reſpect of all our actions. For this is not the reſolution of a ſincere penitent, to abſtain only from groſs and notorious, from ſcandalous and open ſins; but likewiſe to refrain from the commiſſion of thoſe ſins which are ſmall in the eſteem of men, and not branded with a mark of publick infamy and reproach; to forbear ſin in ſecret, and when no eye of man ſees us and takes notice of us. This is not a ſincere reſolution, to reſolve to practiſe the duties and virtues of religion in publick, and to neglect them in private; to reſolve to perform the duties of the firſt table, and to paſs by thoſe of the ſecond; to reſolve to ſerve God,

and

and to take a liberty to defraud and cozen men; to honour our father which is heaven, and to injure and hate our brethren upon earth; "to love our neigh-"bour, and to hate our enemy," as the Jews did of old time; to reſolve againſt ſwearing, and to allow ourſelves the liberty to ſpeak falſely, and to break our word; to flee from ſuperſtition, and to run into faction; to abhor idols, and to commit ſacrilege; to reſolve to be devout at church, and deceitful in our ſhops; to be very ſcrupulous about leſſer matters, and to be very zealous about indifferent things; "to tithe mint and aniſe and cummin, "and to omit the weightier matters of the law, "mercy and fidelity and juſtice;" to be very rigid in matters of faith and opinion, but looſe in life and practice. SERM. CLXVII.

No; the reſolution of a ſincere penitent muſt be univerſal and uniform: it muſt extend alike to the forbearing of all ſin, and the exerciſe of every grace and virtue, and to the due practice and performance of every part of our duty. The true penitent muſt reſolve for the future to abſtain from all ſin, "to be "holy in all manner of converſation, and to abound "in all the fruits of righteouſneſs, which by JESUS "CHRIST are to the praiſe and glory of GOD." For if a man do truly repent of his wicked life, there is the very ſame reaſon why he ſhould reſolve againſt all ſin, as why he ſhould reſolve againſt any; why he ſhould obſerve all the commandments of GOD, as why he ſhould keep any one of them. For as St. James reaſons concerning him that wilfully breaks any one commandment of GOD, that "he is guilty "of all, and breaks the whole law;" becauſe the authority of GOD is equally ſtampt upon all his laws, and is violated and contemned by the wilful tranſgreſ-

ſion of any one of them; "For he that hath ſaid, "thou ſhalt not kill, hath likewiſe ſaid, thou ſhalt "not commit adultery, and thou ſhalt not ſteal:" ſo he that reſolves againſt any one ſin, or upon performance of any one part of his duty, ought for the very ſame reaſon to make his reſolution univerſal; becauſe one ſin is evil and provoking to GOD, as well as another; and the performance of one part of our duty good and pleaſing to him, as well as another, and there is no difference. So that he that reſolves againſt any ſin, upon wiſe and reaſonable grounds, becauſe of the evil of it, and the danger of the wrath of GOD to which it expoſeth us, ought for the ſame reaſon to reſolve againſt all ſin; becauſe it is damnable to commit adultery, and to ſteal, as well as to kill; and that reſolution againſt ſin, which is not univerſal, it is a plain caſe that it is not true and ſincere, and that it was not taken up out of the ſenſe of the intrinſical evil of ſin, and the danger of it in reſpect of GOD and the judgment of another world; (for this reaſon holds againſt every ſin, and remains always the ſame) but that it was taken up upon ſome inferior conſideration, either becauſe of the ſhame and infamy of it among men, or becauſe of ſome other temporal inconvenience, which if the man could be ſecured againſt, he would preſently break his reſolution, and return to the commiſſion of that ſin, with as much freedom as any other.

2. A ſincere reſolution implies a reſolution of the means as well as of the end. He that is truly and honeſtly reſolved againſt any ſin, is likewiſe reſolved to avoid as much as is poſſible the occaſions and temptations which may lead or draw him to that ſin; or if they happen to preſent themſelves to him, he is reſolved to ſtand upon his guard, and to reſiſt them.

In

SERM. CLXVII.

In like manner he that ſincerely reſolves upon doing his duty in any kind, muſt reſolve upon the means that are requiſite and neceſſary to the due diſcharge and performance of that duty. As he that reſolves againſt that needleſs and uſeleſs ſin of ſwearing in common converſation, muſt reſolve alſo "to ſet a "guard before the door of his lips," ſeeing it is certain that it requires great care and attention, at leaſt for ſome competent time, to get rid of a habit.

When David reſolved "not to offend with his "tongue," he reſolved at the ſame time to be very watchful over himſelf, Pſal. xxxix. 1. "I ſaid I will "take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my "tongue: I will keep my mouth as with a bridle, "while the wicked is before me." For a man to reſolve againſt any ſin or vice, and yet to involve himſelf continually in the occaſions, and to run himſelf into the company and temptations, which do naturally, and will almoſt neceſſarily lead and betray him into thoſe ſins, is a plain evidence of inſincerity. This I take for a certain rule, that whatever can reaſonably move a man to reſolve upon any end, will, if his reſolution be ſincere and honeſt, determine him every whit as ſtrongly to uſe all thoſe means which are neceſſary in order to that end. But of this I have ſpoken elſewhere.

3. A ſincere reſolution of leaving our ſins, and returning to GOD and our duty, does imply the preſent time, and that we are to reſolve ſpeedily and without delay to put this reſolution in practice; that we are preremptorily determined not to go one ſtep farther in the ways of ſin, not to neglect any duty that GOD requires of us, not for one moment; but immediately and forthwith to ſet upon the practice of it, ſo ſoon as occaſion and opportunity is offer'd

SERM. CLXVII.

to us. And the reaſon of this is evident; becauſe the very ſame conſiderations that prevail upon any man to take up this reſolution of amendment, and changing the courſe of his life, are every whit as prevalent to engage him to put this reſolution preſently in practice and execution.

I deny not, but a man may reſolve upon a thing for the future, and when the time comes may execute his reſolution, and this reſolution may for all that be very ſincere and real, though it was delayed to a certain time; becauſe he did not ſee reaſon to reſolve to do the thing ſooner: but it cannot be ſo in this caſe of repentance; becauſe there can no good reaſon be imagined, why a man ſhould reſolve ſeven years hence to change his courſe, and break off his ſinful life, but the very ſame reaſon will hold as ſtrongly, why he ſhould do it preſently and without delay; and over and beſides this, there are a great many and powerful reaſons and conſiderations, why he ſhould rather put this good reſolution in preſent execution, than put it off and defer it to any farther time whatſoever.

What is it that puts thee upon this reſolution of leaving thy ſins, and urgeth thee to do it at all? Art thou reſolved to leave ſin, becauſe it is ſo great an evil? Why it is ſo for the preſent; the evil of it is intrinſical to it, and cleaves to the very nature of it, and is never to be ſeparated from it: ſo that this is a preſent reaſon, and as ſtrong againſt it now, as ever it will be hereafter: nay it is ſtronger at preſent; becauſe if it be ſo great an evil, the ſooner we leave it, the better.

Or doſt thou reſolve to forſake ſin, becauſe thou art apprehenſive of the danger and miſchief of it, that it will expoſe thee to the wrath of God, and to the

the endleſs and intolerable miſery of another world? Why this reaſon likewiſe makes much more for the preſent leaving of it: becauſe the longer thou continueſt in a ſinful and impenitent ſtate, the greater is thy danger, and the greater penalty thou wilt moſt certainly incur; by delaying to put this good reſolution in practice, thou doſt increaſe and multiply the cauſes of thy fear. For hereby thou provokeſt GOD more, and every day doſt incenſe his wrath more and more againſt thee; thou prepareſt more and more fuel for "everlaſting burnings," and "treaſureſt up for thy ſelf more wrath, againſt the "day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous "judgment of GOD." Nay thou doſt not only increaſe and aggravate, but thou doſt hereby haſten thine own miſery and ruin, and takeſt the moſt effectual courſe that is poſſible, to bring thine own fears, and the vengeance of Almighty GOD, ſo much the ſooner upon thee. For nothing provokes GOD to take a ſpeedier courſe with ſinners, and does more quicken the pace of his judgments, than wilful continuance in ſin.

And yet farther; if thy reſolution be valuable and conſiderable to thee, thou takeſt the moſt effectual courſe in the world to fruſtrate and defeat it. Thou art fully reſolved to leave thy ſins hereafter, and thou thinkeſt thou haſt reaſon for it: but by continuing in them for the preſent, thou provokeſt the juſtice of Almighty GOD to cut thee off, before thy reſolution hath taken effect.

Again; doſt thou reſolve to leave thy ſins one time or other, becauſe thereby thou hopeſt to put thy ſelf into a capacity of pardon and mercy, and of eternal life and happineſs? Why this reaſon ſhould move thee to do the thing as ſoon as is poſſible; be-

SERM. CLXVII.

cauſe the ſooner thou forſakeſt thy ſins, thou haſt the greater hope of finding mercy and forgiveneſs with GOD; and the ſooner thou beginneſt a holy courſe, and the longer thou continueſt therein, thou haſt reaſon to expect a greater and more ample reward. Thou canſt not by holding off hope to bring down pardon and mercy to lower rates, and to obtain theſe hereafter upon eaſier terms: No; the terms and conditions of GOD's mercy are already fixed and eſtabliſhed, ſo as never to be altered.

So that whatever reaſon thou canſt poſſibly alledge for taking up this reſolution, it is every whit as forcible and powerful to perſuade thee to put it ſpeedily in execution.

And then there is this reaſon beſides, and that a very conſiderable one, why thou ſhouldeſt immediately put this reſolution in practice, and not delay it for a moment. Thou mayeſt at preſent do it much more certainly, and much more eaſily. Much more certainly; becauſe thou art ſurer of the preſent time, than thou canſt be of the future. The preſent is in thy power, but not one moment more. And thou mayeſt at preſent do it more eaſily; for the longer thou continueſt in ſin, thy reſolution againſt it will ſtill grow weaker, and the habit of ſin continually ſtronger. Thou wilt every day be more enſlaved by the power of thy luſts, and thy heart will every day be more "hardened through the deceitfulneſs "of ſin." All the change that time makes will ſtill be for the worſe, and more to thy diſadvantage. Sin will be as pleaſant to thee hereafter, and thou more loth to leave it, than at preſent. Sin was never mortified by age. It will every day have more ſtrength to bind thee and hold thee faſt, and thou wilt have every day leſs to break looſe from it. For

by every ſin thou doſt commit, thou addeſt a new degree to the ſtrength and force of it; and ſo much ſtrength as thou addeſt to it, ſo much thou takeſt from thy ſelf, and ſo much thou loſeſt of thine own power and liberty. For a man and his luſts are like nature and diſeaſe: ſo much ſtrength as the diſeaſe gains, nature loſeth, and the man is hereby doubly weakened: for he does not only loſe ſo much of his own ſtrength, but the enemy gets it.

Nay thou doſt hereby likewiſe forfeit that auxiliary ſtrength and aſſiſtance which the grace of GOD is ready to afford to men, his reſtraining and his preventing grace. For as a man goes on in ſin, and advanceth in an evil courſe, the grace of GOD draws off by degrees, and his Holy Spirit doth inſenſibly leave him: and when a ſinner is come to this, his beſt reſolutions will "vaniſh like the morning cloud "and the early dew which paſſeth away."

So that it cannot be a true and ſincere reſolution of leaving our ſins, if it do not take place and have not it's effect preſently. For there is no man that takes up a reſolution, upon weighty and conſiderable reaſons, of doing any thing; but if the reaſons upon which he takes it up urge him to do the thing at preſent, he will preſently ſet about it: and that man is not reſolved to do a thing, whatever he may pretend, who hath moſt reaſon to do it at preſent, and may beſt do it now, and yet delays it.

And thus I have opened to you the nature of this holy reſolution of leaving our ſins, and returning to GOD and our duty; and have ſhewn what is neceſſarily implied in ſuch a reſolution, if it be ſincere and in good earneſt; that it be univerſal; and that it be a reſolution of the means, as well as of the end; and that it preſently take place and be put in execution.

tion. And theſe are three the beſt ſigns and marks that I know of, whereby a man may try and examine the truth and ſincerity of that reſolution of amendment, which we call repentance. If it be againſt all ſin, and have an equal regard to every part of our duty; if when we reſolve upon the end, that is, to avoid ſin, and to perform our duty, we are equally reſolved upon the means that are neceſſary to thoſe ends; if the reſolution we have taken up commence preſently, and from that day forward be duly executed and put in practice, then is our repentance and reſolution of amendment ſincere: but if there be a defect in any of theſe, our reſolution is not as it ought to be.

SERMON CLXVIII.

The nature and neceſſity of holy reſolution.

JOB xxxiv. 31, 32.

Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto GOD, *I have born chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more: That which I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

SERM. CLXVIII. The ſecond ſermon on this text.

THESE words are the deſcription of the temper and behaviour of a true penitent, and do contain in them the two eſſential parts of a true repentance.

Firſt, An humble acknowlegment and confeſſion of ſin.

Secondly,

SERM. CLXVIII.

Secondly, A firm purpoſe and reſolution of amendment and forſaking our ſins for the future.

And this latter is ſo neceſſary a part of repentance, that herein the very eſſence and formal nature of repentance does conſiſt. In handling of this argument, I propoſed to conſider,

I. What reſolution in general is.

II. What is the ſpecial object or matter of this kind of reſolution.

III. What is implied in a ſincere reſolution of leaving our ſins, and returning to GOD and our duty.

IV. To ſhew that in this reſolution of amendment, the very eſſence and formal nature of repentance doth conſiſt.

V. To offer ſome conſiderations to convince men of the neceſſity and fitneſs of this reſolution, and of keeping ſtedfaſt to it.

VI. To add ſome directions concerning the managing and maintaining this holy reſolution. The three firſt I have ſpoken to, I now proceed to the

IV. To ſhew that in this reſolution the very eſſence and formal nature of repentance doth conſiſt. A man may do many reaſonable actions, without an explicit reſolution. In things that are more eaſy and natural to us, judgment and reſolution are all one; it is all one to judge a thing fit to be done, and to reſolve to do it. But in matters of difficulty, when a man is to ſtrive againſt the ſtream, and to oppoſe ſtrong habits that have taken deep root, there is nothing to be done without an explicit reſolution. No man makes any remarkable change in his life, ſo as to croſs his inclinations and cuſtom, without an expreſs reſolution. For though a man's judgment be never ſo much convinced of the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of ſuch a change; yet unleſs a man's ſpirit

be

SERM. CLXVIII.

be fortified and fix'd by reſolution, the power of cuſtom, and the violence of his own inclinations will carry him againſt his judgment. Now there is no change of a man's life can be imagined, wherein a man offers greater violence to inveterate habits, and to the ſtrong propenſions of his preſent temper, than in this of repentance. So that among all the actions of a man's life, there is none that doth more neceſſarily require an expreſs purpoſe, than repentance does.

And that herein repentance doth chiefly conſiſt, I ſhall endeavour to make evident from ſcripture, and from the common apprehenſions of mankind concerning repentance.

The ſcripture, beſides the ſeveral deſcriptions of repentance, uſeth two words to expreſs it to us, μεταμέλεια and μετάνοια. The former properly ſignifies the inward trouble and diſpleaſure which men conceive againſt themſelves, for having done amiſs; which if it be κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη, "a godly ſorrow," it worketh in us μετάνοιαν ἀμεταμέλητον, as St. Paul calls it, "a repentance not to be repented of," that is, ſuch a change of our minds, which as we ſhall have no cauſe to be troubled at, ſo no reaſon to alter afterwards. And what is this, but a firm, ſtedfaſt, and unalterable reſolution?

The ſcripture likewiſe uſeth ſeveral phraſes of the like importance to deſcribe repentance by; as forſaking and turning from ſin, and converſion and turning to God. Forſaking and turning from ſin. Hence it is called "repentance from dead works," Heb. vi. 1. and turning to God, Acts xxvi. 20. "I have "ſhewed to the Gentiles, that they ſhould repent and "turn to God," that is, from the worſhip of idols to the true God. And we have both theſe together in the deſcription which the prophet gives of repentance,

SERM. CLXVIII.

ance, Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forſake his ways, "and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let "him return unto the LORD." Now this change begins in the ſinner's reſolution of doing this; and the "unrighteous man's forſaking his thoughts," is nothing elſe but changing the purpoſe of his mind, and reſolving upon a better courſe. And thus Lactantius deſcribes it: *Agere autem pœnitentiam nihil aliud eſt, quam affirmare & profiteri ſe non amplius peccaturum.* "To repent is nothing elſe, but for a "man to declare and profeſs that he will ſin no "more." This is repentance before men. And repentance before GOD is a reſolution anſwerable to this profeſſion. And elſewhere ſaith the ſame author, "The Greeks do moſt fully expreſs repentance by "the word μεταίνοια, becauſe he that repents reco-"vers his mind from his former folly, and is trou-"bled at it;" *& confirmat animam ſuam ad rectius vivendum,* "and confirms his mind for a better "courſe," And how is this done but by reſolution?

And that this is the natural and true notion of repentance appears, in that the heathens did conſent and agree in it. Gellius gives this deſcription of it. *Pœnitere tum dicere ſolemus, cum quæ ipſi fecimus, ea nobis poſt incipiunt diſplicere, ſententiamque in iis noſtram demutamus.* "We are ſaid then to repent, "when thoſe things which we have done begin af-"terwards to diſpleaſe us, and we change our reſo-"lution about them." And ſo likewiſe one of the philoſophers deſcribes it; "repentance is the begin-"ning of philoſophy, a flying from fooliſh words "and actions, καὶ τῆς ἀμεταμελήτου ζωῆς ἡ πρώτη "παρασκευή, and the firſt preparation of a life not "to be repented of."

It is true indeed, repentance ſuppoſeth the entire

SERM. CLXVIII.

change of our lives and actions, and a continued ſtate, as the proper conſequence of it: but repentance is but the beginning of this change, which takes its riſe from the purpoſe and reſolution of our minds; and if it be ſincere and firm, it will certainly have this effect, to change our lives; and if it be not ſo, it is not repentance. For though in the nature of the thing it be poſſible, that a man may ſincerely reſolve upon a thing, and yet let fall his reſolution afterwards, before it come into act: yet in the phraſe of ſcripture, nothing is called repentance, but ſuch a reſolution as takes effect, ſo ſoon as there is opportunity for it. If we change our reſolution, and repent of our repentance, this is not that which St. Paul calls "repentance unto ſalvation." So that no man that reads and conſiders the bible, can impoſe upon himſelf ſo groſly, as to conceit himſelf a true penitent, and conſequently to be in a ſtate of ſalvation, who hath been troubled for his ſins, and hath taken up a reſolution to leave them, if he do not purſue this reſolution, and act according to it.

V. I ſhall in the next place propound ſome arguments and conſiderations to perſuade men to this holy reſolution, and then to keep them firm and ſtedfaſt to it, ſo as never to change it after they have once taken it up.

Firſt, I ſhall propound ſome arguments to perſuade men to take up this reſolution; and they are theſe.

1. Conſider that this reſolution of repentance, is nothing but what, under the influence of God's grace and holy Spirit, which are never wanting to the ſincere endeavours of men, is in your power. And it is neceſſary to premiſe this; for unleſs this be cleared, all the other arguments that I can uſe will ſignify nothing.

thing. For nothing in the world could be more vain, than to take a great deal of pains to perſuade men to do a thing which they cannot do, to entreat them to attempt an impoſſibility, and to urge and ſolicit them with all earneſtneſs and importunity to do that which is abſolutely and altogether out of their power. All the commands of GOD, and the exhortations of his word, and all the promiſes and threatnings, whereby theſe commands and exhortations are enforced, do plainly ſuppoſe, either that it is in our power to do the thing which GOD commands or exhorts us to: or elſe, if it be not (which I grant it is not) that GOD is ready by his grace and ſtrength, if we be not wanting to ourſelves, to aſſiſt and enable us to thoſe ends and purpoſes. For the goſpel ſuppoſeth a power going along with it, and that the holy Spirit of GOD works upon the minds of men, to quicken and excite and aſſiſt them to their duty. And if it were not ſo, the exhortations of preachers would be nothing elſe, but a cruel and bitter mocking of ſinners, and an ironical inſulting over the miſery and weakneſs of poor creatures; and for miniſters to preach, or people to hear ſermons, upon other terms, would be the vaineſt expence of time, and the idleſt thing we do all the week; and all our diſſuaſives from ſin, and exhortations to holineſs and a good life, and vehement perſuaſions of men to ſtrive to get to heaven and to eſcape hell, would be juſt as if one ſhould urge a blind man, by many reaſons and arguments taken from the advantages of ſight, and the comfort of that ſenſe, and the beauty of external objects, by all means to open his eyes, and to behold the delights of nature, to ſee his way, and to look to his ſteps; and ſhould upbraid him, and be very angry with him for not doing ſo. Why, if reſolu-

SERM. CLXVIII.

tion be abſolutely impoſſible to us, and a thing wholly out of our power, it is juſt the ſame caſe. But then we ought to deal plainly and openly with men, and to tell them, that what we ſo earneſtly perſuade them to, is that which we certainly know they cannot do. So that it is neceſſary, if I intend that the following conſiderations ſhould do any good, to aſſure men, that it is not impoſſible for them to make a reſolution of leaving their ſins, and returning to GOD.

It is a power which every man is naturally inveſted withal, to conſider, and judge, and chuſe. To conſider, that is, to weigh and compare things together. To judge, that is, to determine which is beſt. And to chuſe, that is, to reſolve to do it or not. And there is nothing more evident and more univerſally acknowledged in temporal caſes, and in the affairs and concernments of this life. In theſe matters reſolution is a thing ordinary and of frequent practice; it is the principle of all great and conſiderable actions. Men reſolve to be great in this world, and by virtue of this reſolution, when they have once taken it up, what induſtry will they not uſe! what hazards will they not run in the purſuit of their ambitious deſigns! difficulties and dangers do rather whet their courage, and ſet an edge upon their ſpirits. Men reſolve to be rich; the apoſtle ſpeaks of ſome that will be rich, 1 Tim. vi. "they that will "be rich: and though this be but a low and mean deſign, yet theſe perſons, by virtue of this reſolution, will toil and take prodigious pains in it.

And as to ſpiritual things, every man hath the ſame power radically, that is, he hath the faculties of underſtanding and will; but theſe are obſtructed and hindered in their exerciſe, and ſtrongly biaſſed a contrary way by the power of evil inclinations

tions and habits; ſo that as to the exerciſe of this power and the effect of it in ſpiritual things, men are in a ſort as much diſabled, as if they were deſtitute of it. For it is in effect all one, to have no underſtanding at all to conſider things that are ſpiritual, as to have the underſtanding blinded by an invincible prejudice; to have no liberty as to ſpiritual things, as to have the will ſtrongly biaſſed againſt them. For a man that hath this prejudice upon his underſtanding, and this biaſs upon his will, is to all intents and purpoſes as if he were deſtitute of theſe faculties. But then we are not to underſtand this impotency to be abſolutely natural, but accidental; not to be in the firſt frame and conſtitution of our ſouls, but to have happened upon the depravation of nature. It is not a want of natural faculties, but the binding of them up and hindering their operations to certain purpoſes. This impotency proceeds from the power of evil habits. And thus the ſcripture expreſſeth it, and compares an impotency ariſing from bad habits and cuſtoms to a natural impoſſibility; nothing coming nearer to nature, than a powerful cuſtom. "Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leo-"pard his ſpots? Then may ye alſo, that are ac-"cuſtomed to do evil, learn to do well."

But now GOD by the goſpel hath deſigned the recovery of mankind from the ſlavery of ſin, and the power of their luſts; and therefore, as by the death of CHRIST he hath provided a way to remove the guilt of ſin, ſo by the ſpirit of CHRIST he furniſheth us with ſufficient power to deſtroy the dominion of ſin. I ſay ſufficient, if we be not wanting to ourſelves, but be "workers together with GOD," and be as diligent "to work out our own ſalvation," as he is ready "to work in us both to will and to do."

So

So that when we perſuade men to repent and change their lives, and to reſolve upon a better courſe, we do not exhort them to any thing that is abſolutely out of their power; but to what they may do, though not of themſelves, yet by the grace of GOD, which is always ready to aſſiſt them, unleſs by their former groſs neglects and long obſtinacy in an evil courſe, they have provoked GOD to withdraw his grace from them. So that though, conſidering our own ſtrength abſtractedly, and ſeparately from the grace of GOD, theſe things be not in our power; yet the grace of GOD puts them into our power.

And this is ſo far from derogating from the grace of GOD, that it is highly to the praiſe of it. For if the grace of GOD makes us able to repent and reſolve upon a new life, he that aſſerts this does not attribute his repentance to himſelf, but to the grace of GOD: nay he that ſays that GOD's grace excites, and is ready to aſſiſt men to do what GOD commands, repreſents GOD immenſely more good and gracious, than he that ſays that GOD commands men to do that which by their natural power they cannot do, and will condemn them for not doing it, and yet denies them that grace which is neceſſary to the doing of it.

Let this then be eſtabliſhed as a neceſſary conſideration to prevent diſcouragement, that to reſolve upon the change of our lives, is that which by the grace of GOD we are enabled to do, if we will. Reſolution is no ſtrange and extraordinary thing; it is one of the moſt common acts that belongs to us as we are men; but we do not ordinarily apply it to the beſt purpoſes. It is not ſo ordinary for men to reſolve to be good, as to be rich and great; not ſo common for men to reſolve againſt ſin, as to reſolve againſt poverty and ſuffering. It is not

ſo

ſo uſual for men to reſolve to keep a good conſcience, as to keep a good place. Indeed our corrupt nature is much more oppoſite to this holy kind of reſolution. But then to balance and anſwer this, GOD hath promiſed greater and more immediate aſſiſtance to us in this caſe, than in any other. There is a general bleſſing and common aſſiſtance promiſed to reſolution and diligence about temporal things; and GOD's providence doth often advance ſuch perſons to riches and honour. The diligent hand, with GOD's bleſſing, makes rich, as Solomon tells us, Prov. x. 4. and xxii. 29. Seeſt thou" (ſays he) "a "man diligent in his buſineſs? He ſhall ſtand before "kings, he ſhall not ſtand before mean men." Now diligence is the effect of a great and vigorous reſolution. But there is a ſpecial and extraordinary bleſſing and aſſiſtance, that attends the reſolution and endeavour of a holy life. GOD hath not promiſed to ſtrengthen men with all might in the way to riches and honours, and to aſſiſt the ambitious and covetous deſigners of this world, with "a mighty "and glorious power, ſuch as raiſed up JESUS from "the dead:" but this he hath promiſed to thoſe, who with a firm purpoſe and reſolution do engage in the ways of religion. Let us then ſhake off our ſloth and liſtleſneſs, and in that ſtrength and aſſiſtance which GOD offers, let us reſolve to leave our ſins, and to amend our lives.

2. Conſider what it is that you are to reſolve upon; to leave your ſins, and to return to GOD and goodneſs. So that the things I am perſuading you to reſolve upon are the ſtrongeſt reaſons that can be for ſuch a reſolution. Sin is ſuch a thing, that there can be no better argument to make men reſolve againſt it, than to conſider what it is, and to think

ſeriouſly

SERM. CLXVIII.

ſeriouſly of the nature and conſequence of it. And GOD and goodneſs are ſo amiable and deſirable, that the very propoſal of theſe objects hath invitations and allurements enough to inflame our deſires after them, and to make us ruſh into the embraces of them. If we would but enter into the ſerious conſideration of them, we ſhould ſoon be reſolved in our minds about them.

Do but conſider a little what ſin is. It is the ſhame and blemiſh of thy nature, the reproach and diſgrace of thy underſtanding and reaſon, the great deformity and diſeaſe of thy ſoul, and the eternal enemy of thy reſt and peace. It is thy ſhackles and thy fetters, the tyrant that oppreſſes thee and reſtrains thee of thy liberty, and condemns thee to the baſeſt ſlavery and the vileſt drudgery. It is the unnatural and violent ſtate of thy ſoul, the worm that perpetually gnaws thy conſcience, the cauſe of all fears and troubles, and of all the evils and miſeries, all the miſchiefs and diſorders that are in the world; it is the foundation and fuel of hell; it is that which puts thee out of the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of thyſelf, which doth alienate and ſeparate thee from GOD the fountain of bliſs and happineſs, which provokes him to be thine enemy, and lays thee open every moment to the fierce revenge of his juſtice, and if thou doſt perſiſt and continue in it, will finally ſink and oppreſs thee under the inſupportable weight of his wrath, and make thee ſo weary of thyſelf, that thou ſhalt wiſh a thouſand times that thou hadſt never been; and will render thee ſo perfectly miſerable, that thou wouldeſt eſteem it a great happineſs to exchange thy condition with the moſt wretched and forlorn perſon that ever lived upon earth, to be perpetually upon a rack, and to lie down

down for ever under the rage of all the moſt violent diſeaſes and pains that ever afflicted mankind. Sin is all this which I have deſcribed, and will certainly bring upon thee all thoſe evils and miſchiefs which I have mentioned, and make thee far more miſerable than I am able to expreſs, or thou to conceive. And art thou not yet reſolved to leave it? Shall I need to uſe any other arguments to ſet thee againſt it, and to take thee off from the love and practice of it, than this repreſentation which I have now made of the horrible nature and conſequences of it?

And then conſider on the other hand, what it is that I am perſuading thee to turn to; to thy GOD and duty. And would not this be a bleſſed change indeed! To leave the greateſt evil, and to return to the chief good! For this reſolution of returning to GOD, is nothing elſe but a reſolution to be wiſe and happy, and to put thyſelf into the poſſeſſion of that which is a greater good, if it is poſſible, than ſin is an evil, and will render thee more happy, than ſin can make thee miſerable. Didſt thou but think what GOD is, and what he will be to thee if thou wilt return to him, how kindly he will receive thee after all thy wandrings from him days without number, thou wouldſt ſoon take up the reſolution of the prodigal, and ſay, "I will ariſe and go to my father."

And conſider likewiſe what it is to return to thy duty. It is nothing elſe but to do what becomes thee, and what is ſuitable to the original frame of thy nature, and to the trueſt dictates of thy reaſon and conſcience, and what is not more thy duty, than it is thy intereſt and thy happineſs. For that which GOD requires of us, is to be righteous and holy and good, that is, to be like GOD himſelf, who is the pattern of all perfection and happineſs. It is to have

our lives conformed to his will, which is always perfect holineſs and goodneſs, a ſtate of peace and tranquillity, and the very temper and diſpoſition of happineſs. It is that which is a principal and moſt eſſential ingredient into the felicity of the divine nature, and without which GOD would not be what he is, but a deformed and imperfect and miſerable being.

And if this be a true repreſentation which I have made to you, of ſin and vice on the one hand, and of GOD and goodneſs on the other, what can be more powerful than the ſerious conſideration of it, to engage us to a ſpeedy reſolution of leaving our ſins, and of "turning and cleaving to the LORD "with full purpoſe of heart?" After this we cannot but conclude with the penitent in the text; "Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto GOD, I will not "offend any more: that which I ſee not, teach "thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do "no more."

3. Conſider how unreaſonable it is to be unreſolved in a caſe of ſo great moment and concernment. There is no greater argument of a man's weakneſs, than irreſolution in matters of mighty conſequence, when both the importance of the thing, and exigency of preſent circumſtances require a ſpeedy reſolution. We ſhould account it a ſtrange folly, for a man to be unreſolved in the cleareſt and plaineſt matters that concern his temporal welfare and ſafety. If a man could not determine himſelf whether he ſhould eat or ſtarve; if he were dangerouſly ſick, and could not determine whether he ſhould take phyſick or die; or if one that were in priſon, could not reſolve himſelf whether he ſhould accept of liberty, and be content to be releaſed; or if a fair eſtate were offered to him, he ſhould deſire ſeven years time

to conſider whether he ſhould take it or not: this would be ſo abſurd in the common affairs of life, that a man would be thought infatuated, that ſhould be doubtful and unreſolved in caſes ſo plain, and of ſuch preſſing concernment. If a man were under the ſentence and condemnation of the law, and liable to be executed upon the leaſt intimation of the prince's pleaſure, and a pardon were graciouſly offered to him, with this intimation, that this would probably be the laſt offer of mercy that ever would be made to him; one would think that in this caſe a man ſhould ſoon be determined what to do, or rather that he ſhould not need to deliberate at all about it; becauſe there is no danger of raſhneſs in making haſte to ſave his life.

And yet the caſe of a ſinner is of far greater importance, and much more depends upon it, infinitely more than any temporal concernment whatſoever can amount to, even our happineſs or miſery to all eternity. And can there be any difficulty, for a man to be reſolved what is to be done in ſuch a caſe? No caſe ſurely in the world can be plainer than this; whether a man ſhould leave his ſins, and return to God and his duty, or not; that is, whether a man ſhould chuſe to be happy or miſerable, unſpeakably and everlaſtingly happy, or extremely and eternally miſerable.

And the circumſtances and exigencies of our caſe do call for a ſpeedy and peremptory reſolution in this matter. The ſentence of the law is already paſt, and God may execute it upon thee every moment, and it is great mercy and forbearance not to do it. Thy life is uncertain, and thou art liable every minute to be ſnatched away and hurried out of this world. However at the beſt, thou haſt but a little time to

SERM. CLXVIII.

reſolve in ; death and judgment and eternity cannot be far off, and for ought thou knoweſt they may be even at the door. Thou art upon the matter juſt ready to be ſeized upon by death, to be ſummoned to judgment, and to be ſwallowed up of eternity: and is it not yet time, thinkeſt thou, to reſolve? Wouldſt thou have yet a little longer time to deliberate, whether thou ſhouldſt repent and forſake thy ſins, or not? If there were difficulty in the caſe, or if there were no danger in the delay ; if thou couldſt gain time, or any thing elſe, by ſuſpending thy reſolution ; there were then ſome reaſon why thou ſhouldſt not make a ſudden determination. But thou canſt pretend none of theſe. It is evident at firſt ſight, what is beſt to be done, and nothing can make it plainer. It is not a matter ſo clear and out of the controverſy, that riches are better than poverty, and eaſe better than pain, and life more deſirable than death ; as it is, that it is better to break off our ſins, than to continue in the practice of them ; to be reconciled to GOD, than to go on to provoke him ; to be holy and virtuous, than to be wicked and vicious ; to be "heirs of eternal glory," than to be "veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction."

And there is infinite danger in theſe delays. For if thy ſoul be any thing to thee, thou ventureſt that ; if thou haſt any tenderneſs and regard for thy eternal intereſt, thou runneſt the hazard of that ; if heaven and hell be any thing to thee, thou incurreſt the danger of loſing the one, and falling into the other.

And thou gaineſt nothing by continuing unreſolved. If death and judgment would tarry thy leiſure, and wait till thou hadſt brought thy thoughts to ſome iſſue, and were reſolved what to do, it were ſomething: but thy irreſolution in this matter will be

be ſo far from keeping back death and judgment, that it will both haſten and aggravate them, both make them to come the ſooner, and to be the heavier when they come: becauſe thou abuſeſt the goodneſs of GOD, and "deſpiſeſt his patience and "long-ſuffering, which ſhould lead thee" and draw thee on "to repentance," and not keep thee back. Hereby thou encourageſt thyſelf in thy lewd and riotous courſes, and, becauſe thy "LORD delayeth his "coming," art the more negligent and extravagant. Hear what doom our LORD pronounceth upon ſuch ſlothful and wicked ſervants, Luke xii. 46. "the LORD "of that ſervant will come in a day when he looketh "not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, "and will cut him in ſunder, and will appoint him "his portion with the unbelievers." None ſo like to be ſurprized, and to be ſeverely handled by the juſtice of GOD, as thoſe that trifle with his patience.

4. Conſider how much reſolution would tend to the ſettling of our minds, and making our lives comfortable. There is nothing that perplexeth and diſquieteth a man more, than to be unreſolved in the great and important concernments of his life. What anxiety and confuſion is there in our ſpirits, whilſt we are doubtful and undetermined about ſuch matters? How are we divided and diſtracted, when our reaſon and judgment direct us one way; and our luſts and affections biaſs us to the contrary? When we are convinced and ſatisfied what is beſt for us; and yet are diſaffected to our own intereſt. Such a man is all the while ſelf-condemned, and acts with the perpetual regret of his reaſon and conſcience; and whenever he reflects upon himſelf, he is offended and angry with himſelf, his life and all his actions are uneaſy and diſpleaſing to him; and there is no way

way for this man to be at peace, but to put an end to this conflict one way or other, either by conquering his reaſon or his will. The former is very difficult, nothing being harder than for a ſinner to lay his conſcience aſleep, after it is once thoroughly awakened; he may charm it for a while, but every little occaſion will rouze it again, and renew his trouble; ſo that though a man may have ſome truce with his conſcience, yet he can never come to a firm and ſettled peace this way: but if by a vigorous reſolution a man would but conquer his will, his mind would be at reſt, and there would be a preſent calm in his ſpirit. And why ſhould we be ſuch enemies to our own peace, and to the comfort and contentment of our lives, as not to take this courſe, and thereby rid ourſelves at once of that, which really and at the bottom is the ground of all the trouble and diſquiet of our lives?

SERMON CLXIX.

The nature and neceſſity of holy reſolution.

JOB xxxiv. 31, 32.

Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto GOD, *I have born chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more: That which I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

SERM. CLXIX. The third ſermon on this text.

THESE words are a deſcription of the temper and behaviour of a true penitent, his confeſſion of ſins, and reſolution of amendment. Concerning

cerning reſolution I have ſhewn what it is in general: What is the ſpecial object or matter of this kind of reſolution: What is implied in a ſincere reſolution of leaving our ſins, and returning to GOD and our duty: That in this reſolution the very eſſence and formal nature of repentance doth conſiſt: and have offered ſome conſiderations, to convince men of the neceſſity and fitneſs of this reſolution, and to keep them ſtedfaſt to it. As, SERM. CLXIX.

1. That this reſolution is nothing but what under the influence of GOD's grace is in our power.

2. The things themſelves, which we are to reſolve upon, are the ſtrongeſt arguments that can be for ſuch a reſolution.

3. How unreaſonable it is for men to be unreſolved in a caſe of ſo great moment.

4. How much this reſolution will tend to the ſettling of our minds, and making our lives comfortable. I proceed to the conſiderations which remain.

5. Then be pleaſed to conſider, that a ſtrong and vigorous reſolution would make the whole work of religion eaſy to us, it would conquer all difficulties which attend a holy and religious courſe of life, eſpecially at our firſt entrance into it: Becauſe reſolution brings our minds to a point, and unites all the ſtrength and force of our ſouls in one great deſign, and makes us vigorous and firm, couragious and conſtant in the proſecution of it; and without this it is impoſſible to hold out long, and to reſiſt the ſtrong propenſions and inclinations of our corrupt nature, which, if we be not firmly reſolved, will return and by degrees gain upon us; it will be impoſſible to break through temptations, and to gainſay the importunity of them; when the devil and the world ſolicit us, we ſhall not be able to ſay them nay, but ſhall be apt to yield to them. There

SERM. CLXIX.

There are many, who have had faint wiſhes and cold deſires, and half purpoſes of leading a new and better life: but having not taken up a firm reſolution in the caſe, having not determined themſelves by a ſevere purpoſe, a little thing ſways them, and brings them back to their former courſe; it is no hard matter to divert them and engage them another way; they are "ſhaken with every wind" of temptation, every little blaſt of oppoſition and perſecution turns them back, and carries them to the ways of ſin: whereas reſolution fixeth a man's ſpirit, and makes it moſt ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, and ſets him upon a rock, which, "when the winds blow, and the rain "falls, and the floods come," abides firm againſt all impreſſions.

If I would give the moſt probable and uſeful advice to engage and continue a man in a good courſe, I would commend to him a deliberate and firm reſolution. David proved this way with very happy ſucceſs, Pſal. cxix. 106. "I have ſworn (ſays he) "and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous "judgments." This was a ſecurity to him againſt all aſſaults, and nothing could turn him from his courſe afterwards; not the dangers he was expoſed to, ver. 109. "My ſoul is continually in my hand, "yet do I not forget thy law;" not the ſnares of wicked men that were laid for him, ver. 110. "The "wicked have laid a ſnare for me, yet I erred not "from thy precepts." By virtue of this reſolution he could riſe up in defiance of all thoſe that would have tempted him to any ſinful action, ver. 115. "Depart from me ye evil doers: for I will keep the "commandments of my GOD."

When a man is thus reſolved upon a holy courſe, he is not eaſily diverted from it, and is able to reſiſt the

the importunity and flattery of temptations, and to ſay to them, as men are wont to do, when they are fully and firmly reſolved upon any thing; "Let "me alone, I am not to be moved, it is in vain to "urge me, I am reſolved to the contrary." Thus ſtiff and reſolute men can be in other caſes, where there is not near that cauſe and reaſon for it: and if we would but take up a generous reſolution to break off our ſins, and to live better lives, this would be the way to conquer that liſtleſneſs and unwillingneſs, which hinders us from engaging in a good courſe, and is the cauſe of ſo many lame excuſes and unreaſonable delays. It is the want of reſolution, and the weakneſs of our reſolutions, which is the true reaſon why we are not more equal and conſtant and uniform in the ways of religion; but are religious only by fits and ſtarts, in a heat, and during ſome preſent trouble and conviction of mind. "The double "minded is unſtable, ſays St. James, in all his ways." When a man is of ſeveral minds, he is eaſily moved one way or other. SERM. CLXIX.

6. And laſtly, Conſider the infinite danger of remaining unreſolved. "The evil day may overtake "you," while you are deliberating whether you ſhould avoid it or not. A ſtate of ſin is liable to ſo many hazards, hath ſo many dangers continually threatening it, and hanging over it, that it is the moſt imprudent thing in the world to linger in it. It is like Lot's ſtaying in Sodom, when the LORD was going to deſtroy it, when fire and brimſtone were juſt ready to be rained down from heaven upon it. Whilſt men are lingering in a ſinful ſtate, if "the "LORD be not merciful to them," they will be conſumed. Therefore it concerns thee ſinner, to determine thy ſelf ſpeedily, and to make haſte out of

SERM. CLXIX.

this dangerous condition, " to eſcape for thy life, " leſt ſome evil overtake thee," and leſt death, finding thee unreſolved, determine thy caſe for thee, and put it out of all doubt, and paſt all remedy.

How many have been cut off in their irreſolution? And becauſe they would not determine what to do, GOD hath concluded their caſe for them, and " ſworn " in his wrath, that they ſhould not enter into his " reſt." It may be thou promiſeſt thyſelf the ſpace of many years to reſolve in: " Thou fool, this " night thy ſoul may be required of thee," and whilſt thou art unreſolved what to do, GOD is reſolving what to do with thee, and putting a period to his patience and long expectation of thy repentance: and thou knoweſt not how ſoon GOD may do this, and make an immutable determination concerning thee. And wo unto thee when GOD hath reſolved thus.

Suppoſe thou ſhouldſt be ſnatched out of the world, and hurried before the dreadful tribunal of GOD, in this doubtful and unreſolved ſtate. And this is poſſible enough; becauſe thou haſt no certain tenure of thy life, thou art at no time ſecured from the ſtroke of death: nay it is probable enough; becauſe thou art every moment liable to ten thouſand accidents, any one of which may ſnap in ſunder the thread of thy life. And ſuppoſe this ſhould happen to thee, what doſt thou imagine would become of thee? Wouldſt not thou then wiſh a thouſand times, that thou hadſt reſolved in time? How glad wouldſt thou then be, that it were poſſible for thee to retrieve and call back but one of thoſe days without number, which thou haſt ſo vainly trifled away, that thou mighteſt reſolve upon " the things of thy peace!" but " thou wouldeſt not" do it " in that thy day,"

which

which GOD afforded thee to this purpoſe; thou haſt let the opportunity ſlip out of thy hands, and it will nvever be in thy power again, but "the things of "thy peace will be" for ever "hid from thine eyes." SERM. CLXIX.

Why wilt thou then be ſo fooliſh, as to run thy ſelf upon the evident hazard of loſing heaven, and being miſerable for ever? Why wilt thou make work for a ſadder and longer repentance, than that which thou doſt now ſo carefully decline? This was the caſe of the fooliſh virgins in the parable, Matt. xxv. who made account to be ready "to meet the "bridegroom" at his coming, but took no care in time to get oil into their lamps. They thought the bridegroom would tarry yet a while longer, and therefore "they ſlumbered and ſlept" in great ſecurity: but at midnight, when the cry was made, "behold the bridegroom cometh;" then they aroſe, and in a great hurry and confuſion went about "trim-"ming their lamps;" they were reſolved then, they would have begged or bought oil, and would have been at any pains or coſt for it: but then it was too late; for the door was ſuddenly ſhut againſt them, and no importunity could prevail to have it opened to them.

Canſt thou be contented to have the door ſhut againſt thee, and when thou ſhalt cry, "LORD open "unto me," to have him return this anſwer, "de-"part from me, I know thee not?" If thou canſt not, reſolve to prevent this in time.

Didſt thou but ſee, and know, and feel, what the miſerable do in hell, thou couldſt not linger thus, thou couldſt not continue ſo long unreſolved. Why the time will come, when thou wilt reflect ſeverely upon thyſelf, and ſay, that I ſhould ever be ſo ſtupid and ſottiſh, to be unreſolved in a matter of ſuch in-

SERM. CLXIX.

finite concernment to me! How often was I admoniſhed and convinced of the neceſſity of changing my courſe? How many inward motions had I to that purpoſe? How often did my own reaſon and conſcience, and the holy Spirit of GOD, by his frequent and friendly ſuggeſtions, put me upon this? How often was I juſt upon the brink of reſolving? I reſolved to reſolve; but ſtill I delayed it till death ſeized upon me unreſolved: and now the opportunity is loſt, and never to be recovered again. I would not in time reſolve to be wiſe and happy: and now by the ſentence of the juſt and unchangeable GOD, it is reſolved that I muſt be miſerable to all eternity.

How ſhould theſe conſiderations quicken us, who have yet theſe opportunities in our hands: which thoſe who neglected and trifled them away, would now purchaſe at any rate! I ſay, how ſhould theſe conſiderations which I have propoſed, move us to take up a preſent reſolution in the matter! Conſider theſe things, ſinner, and lay them ſeriouſly to heart, and ſay to thy ſelf, fool that I have been, to be unreſolved ſo long; not to determine myſelf in a matter of ſuch mighty conſequence; to continue ſo long in ſuſpence, whether I had beſt go to heaven or hell, and which was moſt adviſable, to be happy or miſerable for ever! Bleſſed be GOD that hath been pleaſed to exerciſe ſo much patience and long-ſuffering towards me, that hath ſpared me ſo long, when he might have taken me away, and cut me off unreſolved. My ſoul lies at ſtake, and for ought I know all eternity depends upon my preſent and ſpeedy reſolution. And now by GOD's grace I will not delay one moment more, I will hang no longer between heaven and hell. I ſhall now in the

Second place, offer ſome conſiderations to perſuade

ſuade thoſe that have taken up this good reſolution, to purſue it, and to promote it to practice and execution, and to keep firm and ſtedfaſt to it. And to this end, be pleaſed to conſider theſe three things. SERM. CLXIX.

1. What an argument it is of vanity and inconſtancy, to change this reſolution, whilſt the reaſon of it ſtands good and is not changed. I ſuppoſe that thou wert once reſolved to leave thy ſins, and to return to GOD and thy duty. Why doſt thou not purſue this reſolution? Why doſt thou not perſiſt in it? Surely there appeared to thee ſome reaſon why thou didſt take it up; and if the reaſon remain, and appear ſtill the ſame to thee that it did, how comes it to paſs that thou haſt altered thy mind, and changed thy purpoſe? Either the caſe is the ſame it was, when thou tookeſt up this reſolution; or it is not. If it be altered, then thou haſt reaſon to change thy reſolution: if it be not, thou haſt the ſame reaſon to continue in it, that thou hadſt to take it up. Shew then, if thou canſt, wherein it is changed. Wert thou miſtaken before about the nature of ſin, and the pernicious conſequences of it; or about the nature of GOD and goodneſs? Haſt thou any thing now to plead for ſin, which thou didſt not know or conſider before? Art thou now ſatisfied that ſin is not ſo evil and unreaſonable a thing, as thou didſt once apprehend, or that it does not threaten thee with ſo much danger as thou didſt fear? Hath GOD altered his opinion of it, or is he become more favourable to it than he was? Haſt thou received any news lately from heaven by any good hands, that GOD hath reverſed his threatnings againſt ſin, or that he hath adjourned the judgment of the world, *ſine die*, without any ſet time? That he hath ſet the devils at liberty, and releas'd them from their chains of darkneſs, and

hath

SERM. CLXIX.

hath quenched and put out the fire of hell? Or art thou ſatisfied that there is no ſuch being as GOD in the world, or that he is not ſo good as thou didſt apprehend him to be, or that he will not reward thoſe that diligently ſerve him? Haſt thou found upon trial, that holineſs and virtue are but empty names, and that there is nothing in them? That there is not that pleaſure and peace in keeping the commandments of GOD, which thou wert told of? I am ſure thou canſt not with reaſon pretend any thing of all this. Thy reaſon and conſcience and experience cannot ſpeak one word on the behalf of ſin, or give any teſtimony againſt GOD and his holy ways. And if the caſe be the ſame it was, nothing but thine own vanity and fickleneſs, or ſome worſe reaſon, could move thee to alter thy purpoſe.

2. Let it be farther conſidered, that if we be not conſtant to our reſolution, all we have done is loſt. If thou repenteſt of thy repentance, it will not prove "a repentance to ſalvation." As good to have ſtayed in Sodom, as to look back after thou art come out of it. Thus GOD tells us by the prophet. Ezek. xxxiii. 12, 13. "Therefore thou Son of man, ſay "unto the children of thy people, the righteouſ-"neſs of the righteous ſhall not deliver him in the "day of his tranſgreſſion; neither ſhall the righteous "be able to live in the day that he ſinneth. When "I ſay to the righteous, he ſhall ſurely live: if he "truſt to his own righteouſneſs, and commit ini-"quity, all his righteouſneſs ſhall not be remembred: "but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he "ſhall die for it." So that whatever we have done in the work of repentance, what reſolutions ſoever we have taken up: if afterwards we give over and let them fall, all that we have done is loſt, and will come to nothing.

3. Let

SERM. CLXIX.

3. Let us conſider in the laſt place, that if we be not conſtant to our reſolution, we ſhall not only loſe all that we have done, but we ſhall thereby render our condition much worſe. "Remember Lot's "wife," who, after ſhe was eſcaped out of Sodom, looked back, and was made a particular and laſting monument of GOD's wrath and diſpleaſure; which ſeems to be meant by that expreſſion of her being "turned into a pillar of ſalt," that is, a laſting monument. Prov. xiv. 14. "The backſlider in heart "ſhall be filled with his own ways." "Shall be filled "with his own ways;" this expreſſion doth ſignify a moſt heavy and dreadful curſe upon thoſe, who fall off from their good purpoſe and reſolution, that they ſhall have ſorrow and trouble enough upon it. For ſo likewiſe Prov. i. 26, 27. where GOD threatens wilful and obſtinate ſinners with the heavieſt judgments, that he would "laugh at their calamity, and "mock when their fear comes, when their fear comes "as deſolation, and their deſtruction as a whirlwind, "and fear and anguiſh cometh upon them;" he adds, as the ſum of all other judgments, that "they "ſhall eat the fruit of their own ways, and be filled "with their own devices." Heb. x. 38. "But if "any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no plea- "ſure in him;" which words are a μείωσις, and ſignify a great deal more than ſeems to be expreſs'd. "My ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him;" that is, let ſuch an one expect the effects of GOD's fierceſt wrath and diſpleaſure. For ſo the Hebrews are wont to expreſs things that are great and unſpeakable; when they cannot ſufficiently ſet them forth; by ſaying leſs, they ſay more. So Pſal. v. 4. where it is ſaid, "thou art not a GOD that haſt pleaſure in wick- "edneſs," the Pſalmiſt means, and would have us

to underſtand it ſo, that GOD is ſo far from taking any pleaſure in the ſins of men, that he bears the moſt violent hatred and diſpleaſure againſt them. So when the apoſtle here ſays, "If any man draw back, my "ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him," he means, that it is not to be expreſs'd how GOD will deal with ſuch perſons, and how ſeverely his juſtice will handle them. To the ſame purpoſe is that declaration, 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. "For if after they have eſcaped "the pollutions of the world, through the know-"ledge of the LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, "they are again entangled therein and overcome, "the latter end is worſe with them than the begin-"ning. For it had been better for them, not to "have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after "they have known it, to turn from the holy com-"mandment delivered unto them." The condition of all impenitent ſinners is very ſad; but of apoſtates much worſe: not only becauſe the ſins which they commit afterwards are much greater, receiving a new aggravation, which the ſins of thoſe who are ſimply impenitent are not capable of; but likewiſe becauſe ſuch perſons are uſually more wicked afterwards. For they that break looſe from ſevere purpoſes and reſolutions of a better courſe, do by this very thing in a great meaſure ſear and conquer their conſciences; and then no wonder if afterwards "they "give up themſelves to commit all iniquity with "greedineſs." When after long abſtinence men return to ſin again, their luſts are more fierce and violent; like a man who, after long faſting, returns to his meat with a more raging appetite. This our SAVIOUR ſets forth to us in the parable of the unclean ſpirit's returning again and taking poſſeſſion of the man, after he had left him. Matt. xii. 43, 44, 45.

"When

SERM. CLXIX.

" When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he " walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt, and find- " eth none. Then he ſaith, I will return into my " houſe from whence I came out: And when he is " come, he findeth it empty, ſwept, and garniſh'd. " Then goeth he, and taketh with himſelf ſeven " other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf; and the " end of that man is worſe than his beginning." The moral of which is, that when a man hath once left his ſins, if afterward he entertain thoughts of returning to them again, ſin will return upon him with redoubled force and ſtrength, and his heart will be ſo much the more prepared and diſpoſed for the entertaining of more and greater vices; and his leaving his ſins for a time will be but like a running back, that he may leap with greater violence into hell and deſtruction.

Beſides that ſuch perſons do the greateſt injury to God and the holy ways of religion, that can be, by forſaking them after they have owned and approved them. For it will not be ſo much regarded, what wicked men, who have always been ſo, talk againſt God and religion; becauſe they do not talk from experience, but " ſpeak evil of the things which they " know not:" whereas thoſe who forſake the ways of religion after they have once engaged in them, do diſparage religion more effectually, and reproach it with greater advantage; becauſe they pretend to ſpeak from the experience they have had of it; they have tried both the ways of ſin, and the ways of religion, and after experience of both, they return to ſin again: which, what is it but to proclaim to the world, that the ways of ſin and vice are rather to be choſen than the ways of holineſs and virtue; that the devil is a better maſter than God, and that a

SERM. CLXIX.

ſinful and wicked life yields more pleaſure and greater advantages, than are to be had in keeping the commandments of GOD? And this muſt needs be a high provocation, and a heavy aggravation of our ruin. Let theſe conſiderations prevail with us, to purſue this holy reſolution, after we have taken it up, and to perſiſt in it. There remains only the

VI. And laſt particular which I propoſed to be ſpoken to, viz. to add ſome directions for the maintaining and making good of this reſolution of repentance and amendment; and they ſhall be theſe three.

1. Let us do all in the ſtrength of GOD, conſidering our neceſſary and eſſential dependance upon him, and that "without him," and the aſſiſtance of his grace, "we can do nothing." "We are not (as "the apoſtle tells us) ſufficient of ourſelves, as of "ourſelves," that is, without the aſſiſtance of GOD's holy Spirit, "to think any thing" that is good; much leſs to reſolve upon it. "It is GOD that "worketh in us both to will and to do of his good "pleaſure," that is, of his own goodneſs, as the ſame apoſtle ſpeaks, Phil. ii. 13. It is GOD that upholds us in being, and from whom we have all our power as to natural actions; but as to ſpiritual things, conſidering the great corruption and depravation of human nature, we ſtand in need of a more eſpecial and immediate aſſiſtance.

If we know any thing of ourſelves, we cannot but know what fooliſh and ignorant creatures we are, how weak and impotent, how averſe and oppoſite to any thing that is good. And therefore it is wiſe counſel in all caſes, but chiefly in ſpititual matters, which Solomon gives, Prov. iii. 5, 6. "Truſt in "the LORD with all thine heart, and lean not to "thine

SERM. CLXIX.

" thine own underſtanding. Acknowledge him in " all thy ways: and he ſhall direct thy ſteps." Let us then addreſs ourſelves to GOD, in the words of the holy prophet, Jer. x. 23. " O LORD, I know " that the way of man is not in himſelf, and that it " is not in man that walketh, to direct his ſteps." And let us beg of him, that he would conſider our caſe, commiſerate our weakneſs, and pity our impotency, and that he would join his ſtrength to us, and grant us the aſſiſtance of his grace and holy ſpirit, to put us upon ſincere reſolutions of a new life, and to keep us conſtant and ſtedfaſt to them; " to " open the eyes of our minds, and to turn us from " darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan " and our luſts, unto GOD; that we may repent and " turn to GOD, and do works meet for repentance, " that ſo we may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and an " inheritance among them that are ſanctified through " faith that is in CHRIST."

And for our encouragement in this matter, GOD hath bid us to apply ourſelves to him; and he hath promiſed not to be wanting to us, in words as expreſs and univerſal as can well be deviſed. Jam. i. 6. " If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk it of GOD, " who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth no " man: but let him aſk in faith, nothing waver- " ing," that is, not doubting but that GOD is both able and willing to give what he aſks. And Luke xi. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. " I ſay unto you, aſk, " and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall " find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. " For every one that aſketh, receiveth; and he that " ſeeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it " ſhall be opened. If a ſon ſhall aſk bread of any " of you that is a father, will he give him a ſtone?

SERM. CLXIX.

" Or if he aſk a fiſh, will he for a fiſh give him a " ſerpent? Or if he ſhall aſk an egg, will he offer " him a ſcorpion? If ye then being evil, know how " to give good gifts unto your children; how much " more ſhall your heavenly Father give the holy Spi- " rit to them that aſk him?" To encourage our faith, our SAVIOUR uſeth ſuch an argument as may give us the greateſt aſſurance. We are commonly confident, that our earthly parents will not deny us thoſe things that are good and neceſſary for us, though they may be otherwiſe evil: " how much " more then ſhall our heavenly Father," who is eſſentially and infinitely good, " give his holy Spirit " to us?" And if this be not enough, St. Matthew uſeth a larger expreſſion, " How much more ſhall " your heavenly Father give good things to them " that aſk him?" If there be any thing that is good, and we ſtand in need of it, and earneſtly pray to GOD for it, we may be confident that he will give it us.

2. We ought to be very watchful over ourſelves, conſidering our weakneſs and wavering, and inſtability and fickleneſs, the treachery and deceitfulneſs of our own hearts, and the malice of Satan. It will be a great while before the habits of ſin be ſo weakened and ſubdued, as that we ſhall have no propenſion to return to them again; ſo that our hearts will be often endeavouring to return to their former poſture, and like a deceitful bow, which is not firmly ſtrong, to ſtart back. And beſides the deceitfulneſs of ſin and our own hearts, the devil is very malicious, and his malice will make him vigilant to watch all advantages againſt us; and his great deſign will be to ſhake our reſolution; for if that ſtand, he knows his kingdom will fall, and therefore he raiſeth all his batteries

batteries againſt this fort, and labours by all means to undermine it; and nothing will be matter of greater triumph to him, than to gain a perſon that was revolted from him, and reſolved to leave his ſervice. If therefore thou expecteſt GOD's grace and aſſiſtance to keep thee ſtedfaſt to thy reſolution, do not neglect thyſelf, but "keep thy heart with all diligence," and watch carefully over thyſelf: for becauſe "GOD "worketh in us both to will and to do," therefore he expects that "we ſhould work out our ſalvation "with fear and trembling," leſt by our own careleſneſs and neglect we ſhould miſcarry.

3. Let us frequently renew and reinforce our reſolutions, more eſpecially when we think of coming to the ſacrament, and approaching the holy table of the LORD. Nothing is more apt to beget in us good reſolutions, and to ſtrengthen them, than to conſider the dreadful ſufferings of the Son of GOD for our ſins, which are ſo lively ſet forth and repreſented to us in his holy ſacrament, which as it is on GOD's part a ſeal and confirmation of his grace and love to us, ſo on our part it ought to be a ſolemn ratification of our covenant with GOD, "to depart "from iniquity, and to walk before him in holineſs "and righteouſneſs all the days of our lives."

SER-

SERMON CLXX.

The nature and neceſſity of reſtitution.

LUKE xix. 8, 9.

And if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him fourfold. And JESUS *ſaid unto him, This day is ſalvation come to this houſe.*

SERM. CLXX. The firſt ſermon on this text.

ONE particular and eminent fruit of true repentance, is the making of reſtitution and ſatisfaction to thoſe whom we have injured. As for GOD, we can make no ſatisfaction and compenſation to him, for the injuries we have done him by our ſins; all that we can do in reſpect of GOD, is to confeſs our ſins to him, to make acknowledgment of our miſcarriages, to be heartily troubled for what we have done, and not to do the like for the future. But for injuries done to men, we may in many caſes make reparation and ſatisfaction. And this, as it is one of the beſt ſigns and evidences of a true repentance; ſo it is one of the moſt proper and genuine effects of it: for this is as much as in us lies, to undo what we have done, and to unſin our ſins.

But, becauſe the practice of this duty doth ſo interfere with the intereſt of men, and conſequently it will be very difficult to convince men of their duty in this particular, and to perſuade them to it; therefore I deſign to handle this particular fruit and effect of a true repentance by itſelf, from theſe words, which contain in them,

I. The fruit and effect of Zaccheus his converſion and

and repentance; "If I have taken any thing from "any man, I reſtore him fourfold."

II. The declaration, which our SAVIOUR makes hereupon, of the truth of his repentance and converſion, and the happy ſtate he was thereby put into. "And JESUS ſaid unto him, This day is ſal- "vation come to this houſe, for as much as he alſo "is the ſon of Abraham;" as if he had ſaid, by theſe fruits and effects it appears, that this is a repentance to ſalvation; and this man whom you look upon as a ſinner and a heathen, may by better right call Abraham father, than any of you formal phariſees and Jews, who glory ſo much in being the children of Abraham.

I. The fruit and effect of Zaccheus's converſion and repentance; "If, &c.

This Zaccheus, as you find at the ſecond verſe, was chief of the publicans, which was an office of great odium and infamy among the Jews, they being the collectors of the tribute which the Roman emperor, under whoſe power the Jews then were, did exact from them. And becauſe theſe publicans farmed this tribute of the emperor at a certain rent, they made a gain out of it to themſelves, by exacting and requiring more of the people than was due upon that account; ſo that their calling was very infamous, upon three accounts.

1. Becauſe they were the inſtruments of oppreſſing their countrymen; for ſo they looked upon the tax they paid to the Romans, as a great oppreſſion.

2. Becauſe they were forced by the neceſſity of their calling to have familiar converſation with heathens, whom they looked upon as ſinners. Hence the phraſe uſed by the apoſtle, of "ſinners of the "Gentiles." And hence likewiſe probably it is, that

" publicans and ſinners, publicans and heathens," are joined ſeveral times together, becauſe of the occaſions of frequent converſe which the publicans had with heathens.

3. But principally they were odious, becauſe of the common injuſtice and oppreſſion, which they uſed in the management of their calling, by fraud and violence extorting more than was due, to inhance the profit of their places. Hence it is, that this ſort of officers have been generally branded, and reckoned among the worſt ſort of men. So he in the comedy, πάντες τελῶναι, πάντες εἰσὶν ἅρπαγες, " all publicans are rapacious or robbers." And this is moſt probably the ſin which Zaccheus here repents of, and in regard to which he promiſes reſtitution, κἀ εἴ τινός ἐσυκοφάντησα, " and if I have taken any " thing from any man by falſe accuſation ;" ſo we render the words in our tranſlation: but the word ἐσυκοφάντησα ſignifies more generally, " if I have " been injurious to any one, if I have wronged any " man," as appears by the conſtant uſe of this word by the LXX, who by this word do tranſlate the moſt general Hebrew words, which ſignify any kind of injury or oppreſſion, either by fraud or violence or calumny. So that there is no reaſon here to reſtrain it, " wronging men by falſe accuſation :" for Zaccheus his ſin being in all probability extorting more than was due, this might as eaſily be done many other ways, as by falſe accuſation. And that this was the common ſin of the publicans, appears by the counſel which John the Baptiſt gives them, Luke iii. 12, 15. " Then came alſo the publicans to be baptized, " and ſaid unto him, maſter, what ſhall we do ? " And he ſaid unto them, exact no more than that " which is appointed you ;" that is, do not by fraud

or

or violence extort from any man, any more than the tribute which is laid upon him.

So that Zaccheus here promiſeth, that if he had been injurious to any man in his office, by extorting more than was due, he would reſtore to him fourfold. And if Zaccheus calculated his eſtate right, and intended to reſerve any part of it to himſelf, which is but reaſonable to ſuppoſe; it could be no very great part of his eſtate which was injuriouſly got; and I am afraid a far ſmaller proportion than many are guilty of, who yet paſs for very honeſt men in compariſon of the publicans. The text ſaith, he was a rich man. Suppoſe he was worth ten or twelve thouſand pounds; half he gives to the poor; that was well got, or elſe his whole eſtate could not have made fourfold reſtitution for it. Suppoſe he reſerved a thouſand or two to himſelf, then at the rate of reſtoring fourfold, not above a thouſand can be injuriouſly got, that is about a penny in the ſhilling. I am afraid that now a-days there are few ſuch moderate oppreſſors: nay, it is poſſible that the proportion of his eſtate injuriouſly got might be much leſs; more it could not eaſily be. But whatever it was, he does not plead that by way of excuſe for himſelf, he freely confeſſeth he had ſinned in this kind, and offers reſtitution to the utmoſt, much more than the law did require in ſuch caſes.

II. You have the declaration our SAVIOUR makes hereupon, of the truth of his repentance and converſion, and the happy ſtate he was thereby put into, "this day is ſalvation come to this houſe."

The obſervation I ſhall make from hence is this, that reſtitution and ſatisfaction for the injuries we have done to others, is a proper and genuine effect of true repentance. I know the text only ſpeaks of

SERM. CLXX.

reſtitution in caſe of oppreſſion and exaction: but becauſe there is the ſame reaſon why reſtitution ſhould be made for all other injuries, I think I may, without any force or violence to my text, very well make it the foundation of a more general diſcourſe concerning reſtitution.

In the handling of this, I ſhall,

Firſt, open to you the nature of this duty.

Secondly, confirm the truth of the propoſition, by ſhewing the neceſſity of it.

Thirdly, endeavour to perſuade men to the diſcharge of this neceſſary duty.

Firſt, for the opening the nature of this duty, I will conſider,

I. The act.

II. The latitude or extent of the object, as I may call it, or the matter about which it is converſant.

III. The manner how it is to be done.

IV. The meaſure of it.

V. The perſons who are bound to make reſtitution; and to whom it is to be made.

VI. The time in which it is to be done.

VII. The order of doing it, where more are injured, and reſtitution cannot be made at once to all.

I. For the act. Reſtitution is nothing elſe but the making reparation or ſatisfaction to another for the injuries we have done him. It is to reſtore a man to the good condition, from which, contrary to right and to our duty, we have removed him. Reſtitution is only done in caſe of injury. Another man may be damaged and prejudiced by us many ways, and we not be bound to make reſtitution; becauſe there are many caſes, wherein a man deſerves the prejudice we do to him. As when we are inſtruments of inflicting upon a man the puniſhment which the law doth

ſen-

ſentence him to. And there are many caſes wherein we may be prejudicial to others, and cannot help it. As a man that is ſick of a contagious diſeaſe, may infect others that are about him: but he is not injurious to them; becauſe it is not his fault, but his infelicity.

II. For the latitude and extent of the object, as I may call it, or the matter about which it is converſant. It extends to all kind of injuries, which may be reduced to theſe two heads; either we injure a perſon with or without his conſent.

1. Some injuries are done to perſons with their conſent. Such are moſt of thoſe injuries which are done to the ſouls of men, when we command, or counſel, or incourage them to ſin, or draw them in by our example. For the maxim *volenti non fit injuria*, "there's no injury done to a man that is "willing," is not ſo to be underſtood, as that a man may not in ſome ſort conſent to his own wrong: for abſolute freedom and willingneſs ſuppoſeth that a man is wholly left to himſelf, and that he underſtands fully what he does. And in this ſenſe no man ſins willingly, that is, perfectly knowing and actually conſidering what he does; and commands, and perſuaſion, and example are a kind of violence: yet none of theſe hinder, but that a man in theſe caſes may ſufficiently conſent to what he does. But yet he is not ſo perfectly free, as to excuſe him that draws him into ſin by theſe ways. So likewiſe when a man refuſeth to do that which is his duty without a reward; for inſtance, to do juſtice to another; he is injurious in ſo doing: but yet not altogether without the conſent of him whom he injuries.

2. Injuries are done to perſons without their conſent. And theſe, though they are not always the greateſt miſchiefs, yet they are the greateſt injuries. And

SERM. CLXX.

theſe injuries are done either by fraud and cunning, or by violence and oppreſſion; either by over-reaching another man in wit, or over-bearing him by power. And theſe uſually either reſpect the bodies of men, or their eſtates, or their good name. The bodies of men. He that maims another, or does him any other injury in his limbs or health, either by fraud or force, is bound, ſo far as he is able, to make reparation for the injury. Or they reſpect the eſtates of men. If by cunning, or by violence, or by falſe teſtimony or accuſation, thou haſt hindered a man of any benefit, which otherwiſe would have come to him, thou art bound to reſtitution. If by thy power or intereſt, by thy knowledge in the law, or ſkill in buſineſs, thou haſt directly and avowedly helped and aſſiſted another to do injuſtice to his neighbour, thou art bound to reſtitution; though not as the principal, yet as the acceſſary. If thou haſt over-reached thy brother in any contract, making advantage of his ignorance or unſkilfulneſs; if thou haſt made a gain of his neceſſity; if thou haſt by thy power and intereſt, or by any more violent and forcible way detained his right, or taken away that which was his; thou art bound to make reparation for theſe injuries, to reſtore that which thou haſt borrowed, to return the pledge which thou haſt wrongfully kept, to releaſe unconſcionable forfeitures, to pay debts, to make ſatisfaction for frauds and cheats, to take off all unjuſt invaſions and ſurprizals of eſtates: yea though the fraud be ſuch that thou art not liable to make ſatisfaction by any human law, yet thou art as much bound to it in conſcience to God and thy duty, as if thou hadſt ſtoln, or taken it by violence from thy neighbour. For in truth and reality, fraud is as great an injury as violence, although human

laws cannot take cognizance of it, ſo as to relieve every man that is over-reached in a bargain: nay of the two it is worſe; for whenever thou deceiveſt a man in this kind, thou doſt not only wrong him in point of eſtate, but thou abuſeſt his underſtanding.

And ſo likewiſe in reſpect of a man's fame and reputation. If thou haſt hurt any man's good name by ſlander or calumny, by falſe witneſs, by rendring him ridiculous, or any other way, thou art bound to give ſuch ſatisfaction as the thing is capable of; or if there be any other injury which I have not mentioned, thou art obliged to make reparation for it.

III. As to the manner how reſtitution is to be made.

1. Thou art bound to do it voluntarily, and of thy own accord, though the perſon injured do not know who it was that did him the injury, though he do not ſeek reparation by law. When a man is forced by law to make reſtitution, it is not a virtue, but neceſſity; this is not a fruit of repentance and a good mind, but of good law. And that thou doſt not do it, unleſs the law compel thee to it, is an argument thou wouldſt not have done it, if thou couldſt have avoided it. And though the thing be done, yet thou haſt not done it, but the law; and unleſs thou heartily repent of thy crime, the injury ſtill lies at thy door, and in God's account thou art as guilty as if no reſtitution had been made. Not that thou art bound in this caſe to make new reſtitution over again; but thou art bound to bewail thy neglect, that thou didſt not do it voluntarily and without the compulſion of the law.

2. Thou muſt do it in kind, if the thing be capable of it, and the injured party demand it. Thou muſt reſtore the very thing which thou hadſt deprived

ed

SERM. CLXX.

ed thy neighbour of, if it be ſuch a thing as can be reſtored, and be ſtill in thy power; unleſs he voluntarily accept of ſome other thing in exchange.

3. If thou canſt not reſtore it in kind, thou art bound to reſtore it in value, in ſomething that is as good. As for ſpiritual injuries done to the ſouls of men, we are bound to make ſuch reparation and compenſation as we can. Thoſe whom we have drawn into ſin, and engaged in wicked courſes, by our influence and example, or by neglect of our duty towards them, we are ſo far as becomes the relation we ſtand into them, to make acknowledgment of our fault, to endeavour by our inſtruction and counſel to reclaim them from thoſe ſins we led them into, and "to recover them out of the ſnare of the "devil;" and ſhould never be at reſt till we have done as much or more for the furtherance of their ſalvation, and helping them forwards towards heaven, as we did contribute before to their ruin and deſtruction. If we have violated any one's chaſtity, we are bound to marry them, if it was done upon that condition, and if they require it: thou art bound to keep and maintain thoſe children which are the fruit of thy luſt, and to make reparation to the perſon whom thou haſt injured, by dowry or otherwiſe.

If thou haſt defrauded and injured any man in his good name, thou art obliged to make him a compenſation by acknowledgment of thy fault, by a ſtudious vindication of him, and by doing him honour and repairing his credit in all fitting ways. And if the injury be irreparable (as it frequently happens, that we can hardly ſo effectually vindicate a man, as we can defame him; and it is ſeldom ſeen that thoſe wounds which are given to mens reputation are perfectly healed) I ſay, if the injury be irreparable, eſpecially

cially if it prove really prejudicial to a man in his calling and civil intereſt; if no other ſatisfaction will be accepted, it is to be made in money, "which, "Solomon ſays, anſwers all things;" and the rather, becauſe the reaſon and equity of human laws hath thought fit to aſſign this way of ſatisfaction in many caſes upon actions of ſcandal and defamation. And whatever the law would give in any caſe, if it could be proved, that is the leaſt we are bound in conſcience to do, when we are guilty to ourſelves, though the law cannot take hold of us.

So likewiſe, if thou haſt wounded a man, thou art bound to pay the cure, to repair to him and his relations the diſability for his calling, and his way of livelihood and ſubſiſtence, which he hath contracted by thy injury. And ſo for falſe impriſonment, the real detriment which comes to him by it is to be made amends for: and ſo in all other caſes, the injured perſon is ſo far as is poſſible to be reſtored to the good condition in which he was before the injury.

IV. As to the meaſure and proportion of the reſtitution we are to make. Zaccheus here offers fourfold, which was much beyond what any law required in like caſes. The meaſure of reſtitution by the judicial law of the Jews, did very much vary according to the kind and degree of the injury. In ſome caſes a man was only bound to ſimple reſtitution; but then he was to do it to the full, Exod. xxii. 5, 6. And ſo if that which is another man's be "delivered "unto his neighbour to keep, and be ſtoln from "him, he is to make reſtitution thereof," ver. 12. "And ſo if a man borrow ought of his neighbour, "and if it be hurt or die, the owner thereof not being "with it, he ſhall ſurely make it good," ver. 14. "But for all manner of treſpaſſes by way of theft,

"whether

SERM. CLXX.

" whether it be for ox, for aſs, for ſheep, for rai-
" ment, or for any manner of loſt thing, which ano-
" ther challengeth to be his, he whom the judge
" ſhall condemn, ſhall pay double to his neighbour,"
ver. 9. that is, if it be of " a living creature," if the theft be " found in his hands alive, whether it be ox,
" or aſs, or ſheep, he ſhall reſtore double," ver. 4. But if a man did " ſteal an ox or a ſheep, and did kill it
" or ſell it," he was to reſtore " five oxen for an ox,
" and four ſheep for a ſheep." And thus we find David judged upon Nathan's parable of the rich man, who had taken the poor man's only lamb, and kill'd and dreſt it for a traveller that came to him, 2 Sam. xii. 6. " He ſhall reſtore the lamb fourfold." Now the reaſon of this ſeems to be partly becauſe of the advantage and uſefulneſs of thoſe creatures above any other; and partly becauſe when they were once killed or alienated, a man could not without great trouble and difficulty make diſcovery, which hazard of not-diſcovering ſeems to be accounted for in the reſtitution: but if a man did voluntarily offer reſtitution, before he was proſecuted, for any thing that was taken by violence, or unjuſtly detained from his neighbour, then he was only " to reſtore the prin-
" cipal, and to add a fifth part thereto, and to offer
" up an offering to the LORD, and ſo his atonement
" was made," Lev. vi. 1, &c.

So that the higheſt proportion was a fourth or fifth part, and that only in the particular caſe of ſheep or oxen ſtoln away, and killed or alienated afterwards. Indeed Solomon ſpeaks of a ſevenfold reſtitution, Prov. vi. 31. where he ſaith, " If a thief
" be found, he ſhall reſtore ſevenfold, even all the
" ſubſtance of his houſe;" where ſeven is only a number of perfection, and the meaning is, he ſhall make

make perfect and full reſtitution according to the law, ſo far as his ſubſtance or eſtate will reach.

So that it ſeems Zaccheus in reſtoring fourfold did out-do the utmoſt ſeverity of the law; which in caſe of fraud and oppreſſion was but double, if demanded; if voluntarily offered, was the principal and a fifth part added: but to teſtify the truth of his repentance, and his hearty ſorrow for the injuries he had done, he puniſheth himſelf beyond what the law would have done.

I do not ſay that this example binds as to this meaſure and proportion: nay, I do not ſay we are bound to the proportions of the law; for that only concerned the nation of the Jews: but although we be free from the letter of the law, yet we are tied to the equity of it. As to the ſubſtance of the duty of reſtitution, we are bound to that by the law of nature. As to the meaſure and proportion, the equity of the judicial law in it's proportions, and of Zaccheus his example, ought to be conſiderable to us.

But to ſpeak more particularly concerning the meaſures and proportions of reſtitution, I ſhall lay down theſe propoſitions.

1. Where reſtitution can be made in kind, or the injury can be certainly valued, we are to reſtore the thing, or the value.

2. We are bound to reſtore the thing, with the natural increaſe of it, that is, to ſatisfy for the loſs ſuſtained in the mean time, and the gain hindered.

3. Where the thing cannot be reſtored, and the value of it is not certain, we are to give reaſonable ſatisfaction, that is, according to a middle eſtimation; not the higheſt, nor the loweſt of things of the kind. The injured perſon can demand no more, and ſtrict juſtice requires no more. But it is ſafe for

SERM. CLXX.

him that hath done the injury, rather to exceed than to fall ſhort.

4. We are at leaſt to give by way of reſtitution what the law would give; for that is generally equal, and in moſt caſes rather favourable than rigorous.

5. A man is not only bound to reſtitution for the injury which he did, but for all that directly follows upon his injurious act, though it were beyond his intention. For the firſt injury being wilful, thou art preſumed to will all that which directly followed upon it; according to that rule, *Involuntarium ortum ex voluntario cenſetur pro voluntario.* "We are pre- "ſumed to will that which follows upon a voluntary "action, though we did not intend it." For inſtance, if a man maliciouſly and knowingly ſet fire upon another man's houſe, though he intended only an injury to that particular perſon, yet if a wind come and drive the fire to his neighbours at ſome diſtance, though he did not intend this, yet becauſe the firſt act was unlawful, he is liable to ſatisfy for all the direct conſequences of it. If a man wound another without any intention of killing him, and the wound prove mortal, though there was no probability that death would enſue upon it, the man is bound, becauſe the firſt act was injurious, to make reparation to his relations for the damage they ſuſtain by his death; and if they did depend ſolely upon him, who died by ſuch injury, thou art bound to maintain them.

6. Becauſe thoſe who have lived in a trade and courſe of injuſtice, can hardly remember all the particular injuries they have done, ſo as to make exact ſatisfaction for them, it will not be amiſs over and beſides to give ſomething to the poor. So Zaccheus does here, "half of my eſtate I give to the poor, "and if I have taken any thing," &c. V. The

V. The perſons who are concerned in reſtitution. SERM. CLXX.

And here I ſhall conſider,

Firſt, The perſons who are bound to make reſtitution.

Secondly, The perſons to whom it is to be made.

Firſt, The perſons who are bound to make reſtitution. In general, they who have done the injury, or they who come into their ſtead, ſo as in law or equity the injury devolves and deſcends upon them. But for the clearer ſtating of this, I ſhall lay down ſeveral propoſitions, which may ſerve to reſolve a great many caſes, that may be put concerning perſons obliged to make reſtitution.

1. If the injury be done ſolely by one, without accomplices and partakers in the crime, he alone is reſponſible, and wholly bound to make ſatisfaction; I mean, he only is bound ſo long as he lives; but if the injury deſcends as a burden upon the eſtate, then he who enjoys the eſtate becomes bound to make ſatisfaction; as I ſhall ſhew afterwards.

2. If the injury was done by more, who did all equally concur to the doing of it, they are all equally bound to make ſatisfaction; and they are bound to concur together to that purpoſe; and in caſe of ſuch concurrence, every one is not bound to ſatisfy for the whole, but *pro ratâ parte*, for his ſhare; provided they do among them make full ſatisfaction.

3. If all will not concur, thoſe that are willing are bound among them to make reparation for the injury: nay, if all the reſt refuſe to join with thee in it, thou art bound *in ſolidum* to make full reparation ſo far as thou art able; becauſe every one was guilty of the whole injury. For inſtance, if four men conſpire together to cheat a man, or to rob him, any one of theſe, if the reſt refuſe, is bound to make en-

SERM. CLXX.

tire ſatisfaction; yea, though he was only partaker in the benefit; becauſe, as I ſaid before, he is guilty of the whole injury.

4. If the injury be done by more, who do unequally concur to the doing of it, he that is principal is chiefly and principally bound to make ſatisfaction: and here I do not take principal, ſtrictly in the ſenſe of the law, but in the ſenſe of equity; not for him always who is the more immediate cauſe of the injury, but for him who was the greateſt cauſe, and by whoſe influence chiefly it was procured and done: but if the principal will not, the acceſſories and inſtruments are bound, at leaſt for their ſhare, and according to the proportion of the hand they had in it. But if the principal do ſatisfy in the name, and upon the account of the reſt, then the acceſſories are free from an obligation to reſtitution, and are only bound to repentance.

5. If the injury devolve upon another, by deſcending as a burden upon the eſtate, he who enjoys the eſtate is bound to make ſatisfaction. And when injuries do thus deſcend as burdens and incumbrances upon eſtates, and when not, the civil laws of the place where we live muſt determine: but then where my caſe falls within the compaſs of the law, I am bound voluntarily to ſatisfy without the compulſion of the law. For inſtance, if an eſtate fall to me charged with a debt, which hath been unjuſtly detained, I am bound voluntarily to diſcharge the debt, ſo ſoon as it appears to me, before I am compell'd thereto by the law.

6. As for perſonal injuries which do not lye as burdens upon the eſtate, nor do by the law deſcend upon the ſon or heir, though in ſtrict juſtice a man be not bound to make compenſation for them, for

that

SERM. CLXX.

that would be endleſs, *& infinitum in lege repudiatur*, " no law can take notice of that which is infi-
" nite and endleſs ;" for *quæ exitum non habent habentur pro impoſſibilibus*, " thoſe things which have
" no end, to which no bounds can be ſet, are eſteem-
" ed among things impoſſible," to which no man can be obliged: but though in ſtrict juſtice the heir be not bound to make reparation, for the perſonal injuries of him whom he ſucceeds in the eſtate, yet in many caſes it is equitable, and generous, and chriſtian, for ſuch perſons to make ſome kind of reparation for palpable and notorious injuries. For inſtance, if I be heir to an eſtate, part of which I know certainly was injurioufly gotten, it is not only chriſtian, but prudent, to make ſatisfaction in the caſe to the party injured, if certainly known; if not, to give it to the poor; for by this means I may take out the moth, which was bred by injuſtice in the eſtate, and rub off the ruſt, that ſticks to the gold and ſilver, which was got by oppreſſion or fraud, and ſo free the remaining part of the eſtate from that ſecret and divine *Nemeſis* which attends it and follows it. And for the ſame reaſon, it is very noble and chriſtian, for the ſon and heir of an unjuſt father, to make ſome reparation for his father's injuries by reſtitution, if the thing be capable of it: if not, by doing all good offices to the injured perſons, which is ſome kind of compenſation. And in this caſe the obligation is greater, becauſe by this means a man does not only do what in him lies, to cut off the curſe, which by his father's oppreſſion and injuſtice is intail'd upon the family and eſtate: but likewiſe, becauſe a ſon ought much more to be concern'd for his father, than any other perſon, and to conſult the honour and reputation both of him and his own family; and the

reparation

reparation which the ſon makes, is in ſome ſort the father's act, becauſe he ſucceeds him and comes into his ſtead.

Secondly, As to the perſons to whom ſatisfaction is to be made. For the reſolution of thoſe caſes which may fall under this head, I ſhall lay down theſe propoſitions.

1. If the injured perſon can be certainly known, and be alive and extant, the ſatisfaction is to be made to him.

2. If he be not alive, or which is all one, not to be found or come at, ſatisfaction is to be made to his neareſt relations, his wife, or children, or brothers, or other neareſt kindred. The reaſon is, becauſe ſatisfaction being due, and I having no right to keep that which I have injuriouſly gotten, if I cannot reſtore it to the party himſelf, I ought in all reaſon to place it there where I may moſt reaſonably preſume the party injured would have beſtowed his eſtate, and this part of it amongſt the reſt, had he been poſſeſſed of it. And by the ſame reaſon that I am bound thus to reſtore the part of his eſtate which I have injuriouſly taken or detained from him, I am likewiſe obliged to give ſatisfaction to the ſame perſon for any other injury: for to whomſoever I would pay a debt due to one that is deceaſed, to the ſame perſon I ought to give ſatisfaction for the injuries, by which a debt is, though not formally, yet virtually contracted.

3. If the party injured be not certainly known, or have no near relations known to me, in that caſe I think it very adviſable to give ſo much to the poor, or to ſome charitable uſe; or if the party injured be not capable of proper ſatisfaction, as ſometimes it is a community and body of men that you have injured, in this caſe it is proper to repair the injuries to com-

 munities

munities or bodies of men, by equivalent good offices, or by ſome publick good work, which may be of common benefit and advantage. This is the fifth thing I propoſed to ſpeak to, the perſons concern'd in reſtitution; both the perſons who are bound to make reſtitution, and the perſons to whom it is to be made. Of the reſt hereafter.

SERMON CLXXI.

The nature and neceſſity of reſtitution.

LUKE xix. 8, 9.

And if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him fourfold. And JESUS *ſaid unto him, This day is ſalvation come to this houſe.*

SERM. CLXXI. The ſecond ſermon on this text.

IN ſpeaking to theſe words, I propoſed to conſider,
First, The nature of this duty of reſtitution.
Secondly, To ſhew the neceſſity of it.
Thirdly, To perſuade men to the diſcharge of it.

In treating of the nature of reſtitution, I have conſider'd,

I. The act.

II. The extent of it.

III. The manner how it is to be perform'd.

IV. The meaſure of it.

V. The perſons who are to make reſtitution; and the perſons to whom reſtitution is to be made. I now proceed to conſider.

VI. The time when reſtitution is to be made. In theſe caſes a man is not tied up to an inſtant, not juſt

SERM. CLXXI.

juſt to the preſent time, unleſs the caſe be ſuch, that he can never do it, if he do not do it then. As if a man lie upon his death-bed; that is a caſe that admits of no delay, a man ſhould haſten reſtitution, as he would do the making of his will, and the diſpoſal of his eſtate; leſt if he do not do it preſently, he loſe his opportunity of doing it for ever: but ordinarily, a man is not ſo ſtrictly tied up to moments, and to the preſent time. It is ſufficient that a man be for the preſent reſolved to do it, ſo ſoon as morally he can, ſo ſoon as he would do other actions of great moment and concernment. And to this purpoſe the text gives us an excellent pattern; Zaccheus, the ſame day he repented, took up this reſolution, and to oblige himſelf effectually to put it in execution, he publickly declares it, and before all the people offers to make reſtitution to all whom he had injured.

Therefore take heed of all unneceſſary delays in theſe matters: for though GOD would accept of a firm and ſincere reſolution in this caſe, if a perſon thus reſolved ſhould, before he could bring his reſolution to effect, happen to be cut off by death, or be otherwiſe rendered incapable of doing it; I ſay, though GOD would accept ſuch a reſolution as this, yet he will not interpret that to be a ſincere reſolution, which a man is negligent to put in practice: for every neglect of putting our reſolution in practice, is a degree of quitting and altering it; and he who did not do what he was reſolved to do, when he had an opportunity and ability of doing it, is juſtly preſumed to have let fall his reſolution.

Therefore let no man preſume upon his good intention and reſolution in this kind; for they are only acceptable to GOD, ſo far as they are ſincere and real;

and

SERM. CLXXI.

and they are only ſo far ſincere and real, as the man that makes them, is ready to put them in execution, ſo ſoon as morally he can. And if thou careleſly and ſupinely trifle away thy opportunities in this kind, GOD may likewiſe deprive thee of an opportunity for ever. For all the while thou wilfully neglecteſt to make reſtitution, thou art guilty of the injury; and there are hardly two ſins that cry louder to GOD for a quick and ſpeedy revenge, than injuſtice and oppreſſion, deceit and fraud. GOD many times takes ſuch cauſes into his more immediate cognizance, 1 Theſſ. iv. 6. "Let no man deceive or "go beyond his brother in any thing: for GOD is "the avenger of ſuch." And David tells us, that GOD in a peculiar manner "abhors the blood-thirſty "and deceitful man;" and threatens that "he "ſhall not live out half his days." And GOD by the prophet, Mal. iii. 5. tells us, that "He will "be a ſwift witneſs againſt the oppreſſors." And if GOD be ſo ſwift to take vengeance upon ſuch perſons, ſurely then they are concerned to be very quick and ſpeedy in making ſatisfaction for their injuries and oppreſſions, leſt divine vengeance prevent them, and inſtead of making reparation to men, they be called upon to make ſatisfaction to the juſtice of GOD; and you know who hath ſaid it, that "it is a fear-"ful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD."

You therefore that have hitherto neglected this duty, delay it no longer; by all means diſcharge your conſciences of this burden, before you come to lye upon a death-bed. Then the conſciences of the worſt of men begin to work, like a ſtomach oppreſſed and ſurcharged with meat; and then they are willing for their eaſe to vomit up thoſe eſtates, which they have devoured by fraud and injuſtice; then

SERM. CLXXI.

they begin to conſider the difficulty of being ſaved, and to fear that it will be impoſſible for them ever "to enter in at the ſtrait gate," thus laden with the ſpoils of violence and deceit; even thoſe that have the hardeſt and moſt ſeared conſciences, will be touched with the ſenſe of ſuch great ſins at ſuch a time: but do not thou defer this work to that time, for theſe two reaſons.

1. Becauſe it cannot be ſo acceptable to GOD, to make reſtitution at ſuch a time, as when thou art in health and in hopes of longer life. To give a man his own, when thou canſt enjoy it and uſe it no longer, this is next to detaining of it.

2. Becauſe in all probability the reſtitution which is then made will not prove ſo effectual. What thou doſt thyſelf, that thou art ſure is done: but what thou leaveſt to be done by thy executors, and chargeſt upon them, thou art not ſure will be done; ten to one but if they can find out any trick and evaſion in law, either to delay or avoid the doing of it, it ſhall either never be done, or very ſlowly. This is the ſixth thing, the time when reſtitution is to be made.

But before I leave this head, there is one caſe very proper to be conſidered, which relates to this circumſtance of time, and that is concerning injuries of a very ancient date; that is, how far this duty of reſtitution is to look backward, and whether it doth not expire by tract of time? For anſwer to this, I ſhall lay down theſe propoſitions.

1. At what diſtance of time ſoever the law would in the caſe make reparation and give ſatisfaction, we are undoubtedly bound in conſcience voluntarily to give it. I deliver this generally; becauſe, though it be poſſible ſome civil laws may be in ſome caſes unreaſonable in this matter, yet they are our beſt rule

and guide ; and ſpeaking generally and for the moſt part, they are as equitable as the reaſon of man could deviſe. Not that we are to tie ourſelves ſtrictly to the law, ſo as not to go farther, if reaſon and equity require ; for, as Seneca ſays, *Parum eſt ad legem bonum eſſe*, " it is no great argument of goodneſs, " to be juſt as good as the law requires." Therefore I think it will very well become a good man, in many caſes, rather to be better than the law, than to keep ſtrictly to it.

2. In caſes where the law hath not determined the time, we may do well to obſerve a proportion to what the law hath determined in other caſes, which come neareſt our own caſe.

3. When the injury is ſo old, that the right which the injured perſon had to reparation is reaſonably preſumed to be quitted and forſaken, then the obligation to ſatisfaction ceaſeth and expires. The reaſon is plain, becauſe every man may recede from his own right, and give it up to another ; and where a man may reaſonably be preſumed to have parted with his right to another, the obligation to reſtitution ceaſeth, and the right of claiming it. Now when a thing begins, *haberi pro derelicto*, that is, when a right may reaſonably be preſumed to be quitted and forſaken, cannot in general be determined : but this muſt be eſtimated according to the importance of the right and thing in controverſy, as whether it be more or leſs conſiderable ; and according to the reaſon and determination of laws about things of this nature. To illuſtrate this rule by inſtances. The Saxons, Danes, and Normans, did at ſeveral times invade and conquer this nation, and conquered it we will ſuppoſe unjuſtly, and conſequently did hold and poſſeſs that which truly belonged to others, contrary

SERM. CLXXI.

to right; and ſeveral of the poſterity of each of theſe do probably to this day hold what was then injuriouſly gotten; I ſay, in this caſe, the obligation to ſatisfaction and reſtitution is long ſince expired, and the original title, which thoſe who were diſpoſſeſſed had, is reaſonably preſumed to be long ſince quitted and forſaken; and that for very wiſe reaſons in law and government; becauſe it would confound and unſettle all eſtates, if every thing, the original title whereof is naught, were to be reſtored; and it is but equal to preſume, that all mankind are ſo reaſonable, as to quit their right in ſuch caſes, rather than to cauſe endleſs diſturbances, and to have the guilt of injuſtice everlaſtingly perpetuated. And though it be a rule in civil law, that *vitioſum initio, tractu temporis non convaleſcit*, "a title originally "bad can never by time be made juſt;" it is only true thus far, that time in itſelf doth not alter the nature of things: but conſidering the neceſſities of the world, and the infinite difficulties of retrieving an ancient right, and the inconveniencies and diſturbances that would thereby redound to human ſociety, it is better that an injury ſhould be perpetuated, than that a great inconveniency ſhould come by endeavouring to redreſs it; ſo that although conſidering a thing ſimply in itſelf, an injury is ſo far from being leſſened or nulled by tract of time, that it is increaſed, and the longer it continues, the greater it is; yet by accident, and in compliance with the neceſſity of things, length of time may give a right to that which was at firſt injuriouſly poſſeſs'd. Judg. xi. 26. Thus Jephthah reaſons with the king of Ammon, who had made war for recovery of an ancient right, as he ſuppoſed. And though the inſtances I have given of the unjuſt conqueſt of a nation be great and publick;

publick; yet the ſame is to be determined proportionably in leſs and particular caſes. And thus I have done with the ſixth thing. SERM. CLXXI.

VII. And laſtly, as to the order of reſtitution. When we have injured a great many, and are not able to make reſtitution to all at once, our beſt prudence and diſcretion muſt govern us herein. Becauſe no certain rule can be given, which will reach all caſes, I will only ſay this in general, that it is reaſonable firſt to make reparation for the oldeſt and greateſt injuries; and *cæteris paribus*, if all other conſiderations be equal, to conſider thoſe firſt who are moſt neceſſitous, and if there be any other ſpecial reaſon and obligation ariſing from the nature of the injury, or the circumſtances of the perſon injured, to have regard to them. I come now in the

Second place, to confirm the truth of the propoſition, that to make reſtitution and ſatisfaction to thoſe whom we have injured, is a proper and neceſſary fruit of a true repentance. And this will appear, if we conſider theſe two things.

I. Our obligation to this duty.

II. The nature of repentance.

I. Our obligation to this duty. Upon the ſame account that we are obliged to repentance, we are obliged to reſtitution; and both theſe obligations ariſe from natural equity and juſtice. All ſin is an injury done; and though repentance be not ſtrictly ſatisfaction, yet it is the beſt we can make; and he is unjuſt, who having done an injury, does not make the beſt reparation he can. But now there are ſome ſins, in which, beſides the injury that is done to GOD by them, upon the general account, as they are ſins and violations of his laws, there is likewiſe a particular injury done to men; and ſuch are all thoſe, the

SERM. CLXXI.

the effect whereof redounds to the prejudice of other men: ſuch are fraud and oppreſſion, and all other ſins whereby others are injured. So that in theſe kinds of ſins, there are two things conſiderable, the irregularity and vitiouſneſs of the act, and the evil effects of it upon other men: the former reſpects the law, and calls for ſorrow and repentance for our violation of it; the latter reſpects the perſon that is injured, and calls for ſatisfaction and reſtitution. So that our obligation to reſtitution is founded in the immutable and indiſpenſable law of nature, which is "to "do that to another, which we would have another "do to us." We would have no man be injurious to us, or if he hath been ſo, we would have him make ſatisfaction and reparation to us of the injury he hath done; and we take it grievouſly from him, if he do not. Now nothing is more juſt and equitable, than that we ſhould do that to others, which we in like caſe would expect from them: for the very ſame obligation that lyes upon others towards us, does lye upon us in regard to others.

II. This will yet further appear, if we conſider the nature of repentance, which is to be ſorry for what we have done, and not to do the like for the future. Now if thou be ſorry for what thou haſt done, thou wiſheſt with all thy heart thou hadſt not done it; and if thou doſt ſo, thou wilt undo, as much as in thee lyeth, what thou haſt done. Now the beſt way to undo an injury, is to make reparation for it; and till we do this, we continue in the ſin. For if it was a ſin, to do the injury at firſt, it is the ſame continued, not to make ſatisfaction; and we do not ceaſe to commit the ſin, ſo long as we detain that which is another's right. Nothing but reſtitution can ſtop the progreſs of ſin: for if it be a ſin to take

take that which is another man's from him by fraud or violence, it is the ſame continued and virtually repeated, to detain and keep it from him; and nothing more contrary to repentance, than to continue in the ſin thou pretendeſt to repent of. For how art thou ſorry for doing of it, if thou continueſt to do it, if thou wilt go on to do it and do it again? How doſt thou hate thy ſin, if thou enjoy the benefit and reap the advantage of it? If thou doeſt this, it is an argument thou loveſt thy ſin ſtill: for thou didſt never love it for itſelf, but for the profit of it; and ſo long as thou retaineſt that, thou canſt not be quit of the ſin. Thou holdeſt faſt thy ſin ſo long as thou refuſeſt to make ſatisfaction for it; and repentance without reſtitution differs as much from true repentance, as continuance in ſin does from the forſaking of it. *Si res aliena non redditur, non agitur pœnitentia, ſed fingitur*; ſo St. Auguſtine "If we "do not reſtore that which we have injuriouſly de-"tained from another, our repentance is not real, "but feigned and hypocritical," and will not be effectual to the obtaining of our pardon. It is a very common, but a true and terrible ſaying, *Non dimittitur peccatum, niſi reſtituatur ablatum*, "no re-"miſſion without reſtitution." If we will inherit the profit and advantage of ſin, we cannot think it unreaſonable or unjuſt that we ſhould inherit the puniſhment of it.

When the ſcripture ſpeaks of repentance, it frequently mentions reſtitution as a proper fruit and effect of it, and as a neceſſary and indiſpenſable condition of pardon and life. Ezek. xxxiii. 14, 15, 16. "Again, when I ſay unto the wicked, thou ſhalt "ſurely die: if he turn from his ſin, and do that "which is lawful and right; if the wicked reſtore

"the

SERM. CLXXI.

" the pledge, give again that he hath robbed," &c. As if he had ſaid, when I denounce death and deſtruction to the wicked, there is but this one way to eſcape it, and that is by repentance; but then take notice, what a repentance it is, that will avail to this end; it is not a bewailing ourſelves, and lamenting over our ſins, but a forſaking of them and returning to our duty; " If we turn from our ſin, and do that " which is lawful and right." For inſtance, if he have been guilty of injuſtice and oppreſſion; if he leave his courſe, and deal juſtly and righteouſly with his neighbour, and not only ſo, but he alſo make reſtitution for the injury he hath done, and reſtore what he hath unjuſtly detain'd and taken away; " if he reſtore the pledge, and give again that he hath " robbed," and do no injuſtice for the future, but " walk in the ſtatutes of life without committing " iniquity;" upon theſe terms and no other " he " ſhall live, he ſhall not die." Yea the very light of nature could ſuggeſt thus much to the people of Nineveh, that there was no hope, without this fruit of repentance, of appeaſing GOD's wrath. Therefore the king and the princes, after all the external ſolemnity of faſting, and ſackcloth, and crying mightily, they decree that " every one ſhould turn " from the evil of his ways, and from the violence " that was in their hands," *ut rapina manus vacuefaciat, & rapta reſtituat, ſine quo non eſt vera pœnitentia*; ſo Grot. upon the place, " that he empty " his hands of the ſpoils of rapine and oppreſſion," that is, " that he make reſtitution, without which " there can be no repentance:" and upon their doing this, it is ſaid, that " GOD ſpared them, v. 10. " and GOD ſaw their works, that they turned from " their evil ways." It is not ſaid, that he ſaw their

faſting

faſting and ſackcloth, but he ſaw their works, the real fruits and effects of their repentance; and upon this it was that "GOD repented of the evil he ſaid he "would do to them, and he did it not." And elſewhere we find, that GOD ſpeaks with great indignation of the moſt ſolemn repentance, which is not accompanied with this fruit, Iſa. lviii. 3, 4, 5, 6. The people tell GOD how "they had faſted and afflicted their "ſoul, and made their voice to be heard on high:" but GOD deſpiſeth all this, becauſe it was not accompanied with the fruit of repentance, "it is ſuch "a faſt as I have choſen," &c. There is ſo much of natural juſtice and equity in reſtitution, and it is ſo proper a fruit of repentance, that as Grotius obſerves, it is not only the doctrine of the Jews and Chriſtians, but of Heathens and Mahometans, that the repentance which doth not produce this fruit is feigned, and will never avail with GOD for pardon and mercy. Thus much for confirmation of this doctrine.

The third and laſt thing I propoſed was to perſuade to the practice of this duty; and this may ſerve by way of application of the doctrine of reſtitution. The uſe we ſhall make of it is,

Firſt, To perſuade men to the practice of this difficult duty. I doubt not but the arguments I have uſed are ſufficient to convince us of the equity and neceſſity of reſtitution; but what arguments ſhall I uſe to perſuade to the practice and exerciſe of it? When we preſs men to their duty, though we have ſome advantages on our ſide, yet we have alſo great diſadvantages. We have this advantage, that we have the reaſon and conſciences of men on our ſide: but then we have this diſadvantage, that we have to contend either with the luſts or intereſts of men, or both: now that theſe are uſually more powerful, is evident,

SERM. CLXXI.

evident, in that the luſts and intereſts of men do ſo frequently biaſs and draw them to do things contrary to reaſon and conſcience. When we perſuade men to be juſt, and to make reſtitution to thoſe whom they have injured, it is true we have not to contend with the luſts of men, with any corrupt and vicious inclination of nature. There are ſome ſins that have their riſe from mens natural tempers, as paſſion and luſt, and thoſe ſenſual vices that abound in the world: but there's nothing in any man's natural temper and diſpoſition that inclines him to be unjuſt, no man's complexion doth particularly diſpoſe him to lie or ſteal, to defraud his neighbour, or detain his right from him; it is only the intereſts of men that prompt them to theſe things; and they are upon this account the more inexcuſable, becauſe no man is inclined to theſe ſins from particular temper and conſtitution; ſo that an unjuſt man is in ordinary caſes and circumſtances a greater ſinner, than a drunkard or a luſtful man, becauſe no man can pretend to be hurried away by the ſtrong propenſion and inclination of his nature, to cheat his brother; but although when we perſuade men to be juſt, we have not the luſts of men to contend withal, yet we have another powerful adverſary, and that is the intereſts of men, which is one of the chief rulers and governors of this world; ſo that when we preſs men to reſtitution, we touch them in their intereſt, which is a very touchy and tender thing; when we tell them that without reſtitution no man can repent and be ſaved, they think this to be a very hard ſaying, and they know not how to bear it.

But certainly it hath all the reaſon and equity in the world on it's ſide. If it be ſo hard for them to reſtore that which is another man's, is it not much harder for him whom thou haſt injured, to loſe that which

which is his own? Make it thine own caſe; wouldſt thou not think it much harder to have thy right detained from thee by another, than for another to part with that which is not his own? SERM. CLXXI.

But I am ſenſible how little it is, that reaſon will ſway with men againſt their intereſt; therefore the beſt argument that I can uſe will be to ſatisfy men, that upon a true and juſt account, it is not ſo much their intereſt, to retain what they have unjuſtly got, as to make reſtitution. And this I ſhall do by ſhewing men, that to make reſtitution is their true intereſt, both in reſpect of themſelves, and of their poſterity.

I. In reſpect to themſelves. It is better both in reſpect of our preſent condition in this world, and of our future ſtate.

1. In reſpect of our preſent condition in this world, and that both in reſpect of our outward eſtate, and our inward peace and tranquillity.

(1.) In reſpect of our outward eſtate. If we have any belief of the providence of GOD, that his bleſſing can proſper an eſtate, and his curſe conſume it and make it moulder away, we cannot but judge it highly our intereſt to clear our eſtates of injuſtice by reſtitution; and by this means to free them from GOD's curſe. For if any of our eſtate be unjuſtly gotten, it is enough to draw down GOD's curſe upon all that we have; it is like a moth in our eſtate, which will inſenſibly conſume it; it is like a ſecret poiſon, which will diffuſe itſelf through the whole; like a little land *in capite*, which brings the whole eſtate into wardſhip.

Hear how GOD threatens to blaſt eſtates unjuſtly gotten, Job xx. 12, &c. concluding with theſe words, "this is the portion of a wicked man," that is, of an unjuſt man. Jer. xvii. 11. "As a partridge ſitteth

SERM. CLXXI.

" on eggs, and hatcheth them not, ſo he that getteth " riches, and not by right, ſhall leave them in the " midſt of his days, and at his end ſhall be a fool." Men many times live to ſee the folly of their injuſtice and oppreſſion, and their eſtates wither away before their eyes; and by the juſt revenge of GOD they are deprived of them in the midſt of their days. So that the beſt way to fix an eſtate, and to ſecure it to ourſelves, is by reſtitution to free it from GOD's curſe; and when we have done that, how much ſoever we may diminiſh our eſtate by it, we may look upon ourſelves as having a better eſtate than we had; better, becauſe we have GOD's bleſſing with that which remains. If we believe the bible, we cannot doubt of this. The Spirit of GOD tells us this from the obſervation of the wiſeſt men, Pſal. xxxvii. 16. " A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the " riches of many wicked." Prov. xvi. 8. " Better " is a little with righteouſneſs, than great revenues " without right."

(2.) In reſpect of inward peace and tranquillity, it is highly our intereſt to make reſtitution. No man can enjoy an eſtate, that does not enjoy himſelf; and nothing puts a man more out of the poſſeſſion of himſelf, than an unquiet conſcience; and there are no kind of ſins lye heavier upon a man's conſcience, than thoſe of injuſtice; becauſe they are committed againſt the cleareſt natural light, and there is the leaſt natural temptation to them. They have theſe two great aggravations, that they are ſins moſt againſt knowledge, and have moſt of will in them. There needs no revelation to convince men of ſins of injuſtice and oppreſſion; every man hath thoſe principles born with him, which will ſufficiently acquaint him, that he ought not to be injurious to another.

There

SERM. CLXXI.

There is nothing that relates to our duty, that a man can know with greater certainty than this, that injuſtice is a ſin. And as it is a ſin moſt againſt knowledge, ſo it hath moſt of will in it. Men are hurried away to other ſins by the ſtrong and violent propenſions of their nature: but no man is inclined by his temper and conſtitution, to fraud and oppreſſion; and the leſs there is of nature in any ſin, there is the leſs of neceſſity, and conſequently it is the more voluntary. Now the greater the aggravations of any ſin are, the greater is the guilt; and the greater the guilt is, the more unquiet our conſciences will be: ſo that if thou have any regard to the intereſt of thine own peace, if that be conſiderable to thee, which to wiſe men is the moſt valuable thing in the world, do not for a little wealth continue in thoſe ſins, which will create perpetual diſturbance to thee, and imbitter all the pleaſures of thy life. Hear how Job deſcribes the condition of the wicked oppreſſors in the place before cited, Job xx. 12, &c. "He ſhall not "rejoice in them, becauſe he hath oppreſſed, becauſe "he hath violently taken away a houſe which he "builded not, ſurely he ſhall not feel quietneſs in his "belly:" that is, he ſhall have no inward peace and contentment in the midſt of all his outward enjoyments; but his ill-gotten eſtate will work in his conſcience, and gripe him, as if a man had taken down poiſon into his belly.

2. But chiefly, in reſpect of our future eſtate in another world, it is every man's intereſt to make reſtitution. Without repentance we are ruined for ever, and without reſtitution no repentance. "No "unrighteous man hath any inheritance in the king-"dom of CHRIST." If thou continue in thy fraud and oppreſſion, and carry theſe ſins with thee into another

SERM. CLXXI.

another world, they will hang as a milſtone about thy neck, and ſink thee into eternal ruin. He that wrongs his brother hates him, and "he that hateth his "brother is a murderer, and ye know that no mur- "derer hath eternal life abiding in him," 1 John iii. 15. Rom. i. 18. "The wrath of GOD is revealed "from heaven, againſt all ungodlineſs and unrigh- "teouſneſs of men." So that if it be mens intereſt to eſcape the wrath of GOD, it concerns us to make reparation for thoſe injuries which will expoſe us to it. That is a dreadful text, Jam. v. 1, 2, 3, 4. "Go "to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your mi- "ſeries that ſhall come upon you. Your riches are "corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten: your "gold and ſilver is cankered, and the ruſt of them "ſhall be a witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your "fleſh as it were fire: ye have heaped treaſure to- "gether for the laſt days. Behold! the hire of the "labourers which have reaped down your fields, "which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and "the cries of them which have reaped, are entered "into the ears of the LORD of Sabaoth." Do not by "detaining the treaſures of wickedneſs, treaſure "up to yourſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath:" do not make yourſelves "miſerable for ever," that you may be "rich for a little while:" do not for a little "ſilver and gold," forfeit "the eternal inhe- "ritance," which "was not purchaſed with corrup- "tible things, but with the precious blood of the "Son of GOD:" And if this conſideration, which is the weightieſt in the world, will not prevail with men, I can only ſay with the angel, Rev. xxii. 11. "He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill," let him continue in his injuſtice at his peril, and remember what is added at the 12th verſe, "Behold! I come

" quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to " every man according as his work ſhall be."

II. In reſpect of our children and poſterity, it is greatly our intereſt to make reſtitution. GOD many times ſuffers an eſtate got by oppreſſion to proſper for a little while: but there is a curſe attends it, which deſcends upon the eſtate like an incumbrance; and parents many times when they think they entail an eſtate, they entail poverty upon their children, Job xx. 10. ſpeaking of the children of the oppreſſor, he ſaith, " his children ſhall ſeek to pleaſe the poor, " and his hands ſhall reſtore their goods." And Job xxi. 19. " GOD layeth up his iniquity for his " children." Thou layeſt up riches for thy children; and " GOD lays up thine iniquity" and injuſtice " for them," the curſe that belongs to them. Hab. ii. 9, 10, 11. " Wo unto him that coveteth " an evil covetouſneſs, or gaineth an evil gain to his " houſe," &c. Thou thoughteſt to raiſe thy family by thoſe ways; but " thou haſt conſulted ſhame " to thy houſe." No ſuch effectual way to ruin thy family, as injuſtice and oppreſſion. As then you would not tranſmit a curſe to your children, and devolve miſery upon your family, free your eſtates from the burden and weight of what is other mens, leſt by GOD's juſt judgment and ſecret providence, that little which you injuriouſly detain from others, carry away your whole eſtate to them and their family. GOD's providence many times makes abundant reſtitution, when we will not.

Having now endeavoured to ſatisfy men, that it is their trueſt intereſt, to make reſtitution for the injuries they have done to others, it remains only that I ſhould anſwer an objection or two, which men are apt to make againſt this duty.

Firſt,

Firſt, Men ſay they are aſhamed to do it. Anſ. It is not matter of ſhame, but of praiſe and commendation. But it may be thou wilt ſay, it is matter of ſhame to have injured another, and this is the way to lay open thy ſhame. Indeed if the injury were publick, the reſtitution ought to be ſo too, as the only way to take off the ſhame of the injury. For thy reſtitution doth not in this caſe publiſh thy ſhame, but thy honeſty: but if the injury was private, thou mayſt preſerve thy own credit by concealing thyſelf; and provided thou do the thing effectually, thou mayſt be as prudent, as to the manner of doing it as thou pleaſeſt.

Secondly, Another objection is the prejudice it will be to mens eſtates. But this I have anſwered already, by ſhewing that it is more their intereſt to make reſtitution, than to continue in the ſin. I ſhall only add, that, as our SAVIOUR reaſons in another caſe, "it is profitable for thee, that one of thy mem-"bers ſhould periſh, rather than that thy whole "body ſhould be caſt into hell:" it is true likewiſe here, it is profitable for thee, that thou ſhouldſt go a beggar to heaven, rather than that thou ſhouldſt go to hell, laden with the ſpoils and guilt of rapine and injuſtice.

Thirdly, The laſt objection that I ſhall mention, is diſability to make reſtitution. This indeed is ſomething; where nothing is to be had, every man muſt loſe his right: but then remember, that there muſt be a hearty repentance for the ſin; and thy ſorrow muſt be ſo much greater, by how much thy ability to make reſtitution is leſs; and there muſt be a willing mind, a firm purpoſe and reſolution of doing it, when GOD ſhall enable thee, and diligent endeavours to that purpoſe. Under the law thoſe who were

were not able to make reſtitution, were ſold for ſix years, if their ſervice did not make reparation in leſs time. It is true indeed, the moderation of the goſpel does not ſuffer Chriſtians to deal ſo hardly with another: but if the goſpel remit of this rigour, and do not allow Chriſtians to challenge it, we ſhould voluntarily do in effect that which they were forced to, that is, we ſhould uſe our beſt endeavours and diligence to put ourſelves into a condition of making ſatisfaction; and we ſhould not look upon any thing beyond the neceſſary conveniencies of life as our own, till we have done it; unleſs the party injured will recede from his right, in whole or in part. For though the impoſſibility of the thing do diſcharge us for the preſent, yet the obligation ſtill lyes upon us to do it, ſo ſoon as we are able.

And here it will be proper to conſider the caſe of thoſe, who have compounded with their creditors for a ſmall part, whether they be in conſcience and equity releaſed from the whole debt. I am loth to lay unneceſſary burdens upon mens conſciences, therefore I am very tender in reſolving ſuch caſes: but I ought to have a more tender care of the ſouls of men, than of their eſtates: therefore to deal plainly, and to diſcharge my conſcience in this matter, I think ſuch perſons do, notwithſtanding the compoſition, ſtand oblig'd in equity and conſcience for the whole debt, and are bound to diſcharge it, ſo ſoon as they can with tolerable convenience. My reaſon is, becauſe, though they be diſcharged in law, yet the law does not intend to take off the obligation of conſcience or equity, which they are under; but leaves that as it found it. Thus the caſe ſtands; men who are in a way of trade are engaged by the neceſſities of their calling, to venture a great part of their

ERM. CLXXI.

eſtate in other mens hands, and by this means become liable many times to be undone without their own fault; therefore it is uſual, when any man in a way of trade becomes diſabled, for the creditors to make ſuch a compoſition with him, as his eſtate will bear, and upon this compoſition to give him a full diſcharge, ſo as that they cannot afterwards by law require of him the remainder of their debt. Now though this be a favour to the debtor, yet it is principally intended for the benefit of the creditor; becauſe it being his act, it is to be preſumed, that he intended it as much as may be, for his own advantage; and ſo it is, for the creditor has as much ſatisfaction at preſent as can be had, and the debtor is hereby left in a capacity of recovering himſelf again by his induſtry and diligence, which could not be, if he were not fully diſcharged; for if he were ſtill liable for the reſt, he would continually be obnoxious to impriſonment, which would render him incapable of following his calling; or if he were at liberty, he could have no credit to enable him to do any thing in his calling; for who would truſt a man with any thing, who is liable every moment to have it taken from him? So that the reaſon of this plenary diſcharge is this, that men, who are otherwiſe hopeful, and in a fair probability of recovering themſelves, may not be rendered incapable of getting an eſtate afterwards, whereby they may ſupport themſelves, and diſcharge their debts. Now this diſcharge being given in order to theſe ends, it cannot be imagined that it ſhould be intended to defeat them; but it is in all reaſon to be ſuppoſed, that the creditors did not intend to take off the obligation of equity and conſcience, only to put the man into a condition of doing ſomething towards the enabling him to diſcharge his debt. So

that

that unleſs it were expreſs'd at the compoſition, that the creditor would never expect more from him, upon any account of equity and conſcience, but did freely forgive him the reſt, the contrary whereof is uſually done; I ſay, unleſs it were thus expreſs'd, there is no reaſon why the creditor's favour in making a compoſition ſhould be abuſed to his prejudice; and why a legal diſcharge, given him on purpoſe for this reaſon among others, to put him into a capacity of recovering himſelf and giving full ſatisfaction, ſhould be ſo interpreted, as to extinguiſh the equitable right of the creditor to the remainder of his debt.

The ſecond uſe of this doctrine of reſtitution ſhould be by way of prevention, that men would take heed of being injurious, and ſo take away the occaſion of reſtitution, and free themſelves from the temptation of not performing ſo difficult and ſo unwelcome a duty. It is much eaſier of the two, not to cozen or oppreſs thy neighbour, than after thou haſt done it, it will be to bring thyſelf to make reſtitution: therefore we ſhould be very careful, not to be injurious to any one in any kind; neither immediately by ourſelves, nor by aiding and aſſiſting others, by our power and intereſt, or ſkill in the law, or by any other way, to do injuſtice.

SERMON CLXXII.

The uſefulneſs of conſideration, in order to repentance.

DEUT. xxxii. 29.

O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!

SERM. CLXXII.

THIS chapter is called Moſes his ſong, in which he briefly recounts the various providences of GOD toward the people of Iſrael, and the froward carriage of that people towards him.

Firſt, He puts them in mind how GOD had choſen them for his peculiar people, and had by a ſignal care and providence conducted them all that tedious journey, for the ſpace of forty years in the wilderneſs, till he had brought them to the promiſed land, which they had now begun to take poſſeſſion of.

And then he foretels, how they would behave themſelves after all this mercy and kindneſs GOD had ſhewn to them, ver. 15. "Jeſurun waxed fat, and "kicked, and forſook GOD which made him, and "lightly eſteemed the rock of his ſalvation." Upon this he tells them, GOD would be extremely diſpleaſed with them, and would multiply his judgments upon them, ver. 19, 20. "When the LORD "ſaw it, he abhorred them, becauſe of the provok-"ing of his ſons and of his daughters; and he ſaid, "I will hide my face from them, I will ſee what "their end ſhall be: for they are a very froward "generation, children in whom is no faith." And ver. 23. "I will heap miſchief upon them, I will "ſpend

" ſpend mine arrows upon them." And then he enumerates the particular judgments which he would ſend upon them: nay, he declares he would have utterly conſumed them, but that he was loth to give occaſion of ſo much triumph to his and their enemies, v. 26, 27. " I ſaid, I would ſcatter them " into corners, I would make the remembrance of " them to ceaſe from among men: were it not, that " I feared the wrath of the enemy, leſt their adver- " ſaries ſhould behave themſelves ſtrangely, and leſt " they ſhould ſay, our hand is high, and the LORD " hath not done all this." And he adds the reaſon of all this ſeverity; becauſe they were ſo very ſtupid and inconſiderate, v. 28. " For they are a nation " void of counſel, neither is there any underſtand- " ing in them."

And in the concluſion of all, he repreſents GOD as it were breaking out into this vehement and affectionate wiſh, " O that they were wiſe, that they " underſtood this, that they would conſider their " latter end!"

" O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood " this!" What is that? This may refer to all that went before. O that they were wiſe to conſider what GOD had done for them, and what they had done againſt him, and what he will do againſt them, if they continue or renew their former provocations! O that they were but duly apprehenſive of this, and would lay it ſeriouſly to heart!

But from what follows, it ſeems more particularly to refer to thoſe particular judgments, which GOD had threatened them withal, and which would certainly befal them, if they ſtill continued in their diſobedience. " O that they were wiſe, that they un- " derſtood this, that they would conſider their lat- " ter

SERM. CLXXII.

" ter end !" that is, the ſad conſequences of theſe their provocations, that by the conſideration thereof, they might prevent all thoſe evils and calamities, by turning from thoſe ſins which would unavoidably bring them upon them.

From the words thus explained, I ſhall obſerve theſe four things.

I. That GOD doth really and heartily deſire the happineſs of men, and to prevent their miſery and ruin. For the very deſign of theſe words is to expreſs this to us, and it is done in a very vehement, and, as I may ſay, paſſionate manner.

II. That it is a great point of wiſdom to conſider ſeriouſly the laſt iſſue and conſequence of our actions, whither they tend, and what will follow upon them. And therefore wiſdom is here deſcribed by " the con-" ſideration of our latter end."

III. That this is an excellent means to prevent that miſery, which will otherwiſe befal us. And this is neceſſarily implied in this wiſh, that if they would but conſider theſe things, they might be prevented.

IV. That the want of this conſideration is the great cauſe of mens ruin. And this is likewiſe implied in the words, that one great reaſon of mens ruin is, becauſe they are not ſo wiſe, as to conſider the fatal iſſue and conſequence of a ſinful courſe. I ſhall ſpeak briefly to each of theſe.

I. That GOD doth really and heartily deſire the happineſs of men, and to prevent their miſery and ruin. To expreſs this to us, GOD doth put on the vehemency of a human paſſion, " O that they were " wiſe," &c. The laws of GOD are a clear evidence of this ; becauſe the obſervance of them tends to our happineſs. There is no good prince makes laws with any other deſign, than to promote the

" publick

publick welfare and happineſs of his people: and with much more reaſon may we imagine, that the infinite good GOD does by all his laws deſign the happineſs of his creatures. And the exhortations of ſcripture, by which he enforceth his laws, are yet a greater evidence how earneſtly he deſires the happineſs of his creatures. For it ſhews that he is concerned for us, when he uſeth ſo many arguments to perſuade us to our duty, and when he expoſtulates ſo vehemently with us for our neglect of it, ſaying to ſinners, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O "houſe of Iſrael?" "Ye will not come unto me, that "ye might have life," ſays our bleſſed SAVIOUR, with great trouble to ſee men ſo obſtinately ſet againſt their own happineſs; and again, "How often would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth "her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" And to ſatisfy us yet farther, that it is his real deſire, by our obedience to his laws, to prevent our ruin, GOD does frequently in ſcripture put on the paſſions of men, and uſe all ſorts of vehement expreſſions to this purpoſe, Deut. v. 29. "O that "there were ſuch a heart in them, that they would "fear me, and keep all my commandments always, "that it might be well with them, and with their "children for ever!" And Pſal. lxxxi. 13. "O "that my people had hearkned unto me, and Iſrael "had walked in my ways! I ſhould ſoon have ſubdued their enemies, and turned my hand againſt "their adverſaries." Jer. xiii. 27. "O Iſrael! wilt "thou not be made clean? When ſhall it once be?" And to name but one text more, when our bleſſed SAVIOUR wept over Jeruſalem, how paſſionately does he wiſh that "ſhe had known in that her day, "the things that belonged to her peace!"

And if after all this we can doubt whether the faithful GOD means as he says, he hath for our farther assurance, and to put the matter out of all doubt, confirmed his word by an oath, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. "As I live, saith the LORD GOD, I have no "pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the "wicked turn from his ways and live. Turn ye, "turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, "O house of Israel?" So that if words can be any declaration of a hearty and sincere desire, we have no reason to doubt, but that GOD does really desire the happiness of men, and would gladly prevent their ruin and destruction.

If any now ask, Why then are not all men happy? Why do they not escape ruin and destruction? And particularly why the people of Israel, for whom GOD here makes this wish, did not escape those judgments which were threatened; the prophet shall answer for me, Hos. xiii. 9. "O Israel! thou hast "destroyed thyself." And David, Psal. lxxxi. 11. "My people would not hearken to my voice, Israel "would none of me." And our blessed SAVIOUR, Matt. xxiii. 37. "How often would I have ga-"thered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens un-"der her wings, and ye would not!" And John v. 40. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might "have life." You see what account the scripture plainly gives of this matter; it rests upon the wills of men, and GOD hath not thought fit to force happiness upon men, and to make them wise and good whether they will or no. He presents men with such motives, and offers such arguments to their consideration, as are fit to prevail with reasonable men, and is ready to afford them all necessary assistance, if they be not wanting to themselves; but if they will not

be

be wiſe and conſider, if they will ſtand out againſt all the arguments that GOD can offer, if they will receive the grace of GOD in vain, and reſiſt his bleſſed Spirit, and reject the counſel of GOD againſt themſelves, GOD hath not in this caſe engaged himſelf to provide any remedy againſt the obſtinacy and perverſeneſs of men, but "their deſtruc-"tion is of themſelves, and their blood ſhall be "upon their own heads." And there is no nicety and intricacy in this matter; but if men will conſider ſcripture and reaſon impartially, they will find this to be the plain reſolution of the caſe.

So that no man hath reaſon either to charge his fault, or his puniſhment upon God; he is "free "from the blood of all men;" he ſincerely deſires our happineſs; but we wilfully ruin ourſelves: and when he tells, that "he deſires not the death of "a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould turn from his "wickedneſs and live; that he would have all men "to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the "truth; that he is not willing that any ſhould pe-"riſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance; he plainly means as he ſays, and doth not ſpeak to us with any reſerve, or dark diſtinction between his ſecret and revealed will, he does not decree one thing, and declare another.

And if this be ſo, no man hath reaſon to be diſcouraged from attempting and endeavouring his own happineſs, upon a jealouſy and ſurmiſe that GOD hath by any fatal decree put a bar to it from all eternity: for if he had ſo abſolutely reſolved to make the greateſt part of mankind miſerable, without any reſpect to their actions in this world, he would never have ſaid, that "he deſires that all ſhould be ſaved;" he would not have exhorted all men "to work out "their

SERM. CLXXII.

"their own salvation:" had he taken up any such resolution, he would have declared it to all the world: for he hath power enough in his hand, "to "do what he pleaseth, and none can resist his will;" so that he did not need to have dissembled the matter, and to have pretended a desire to save men, when he was resolved to ruin them.

This is the first, that GOD doth really and heartily desire the happiness of men, and to prevent their misery and ruin. I proceed to the

II. That it is a great part of wisdom to consider seriously the last issue and consequence of our actions, and whither the course of life which we lead does tend, and what will follow upon it. And therefore wisdom is here explained by consideration, "O that "they were wise, that they would consider their "latter end!" that is, what will befal them hereafter, what will be the issue and consequence of all the sins and provocations which they are guilty of.

And this is a principal point and property of wisdom, to look forward, and not only to consider the present pleasure and advantage of any action, but the future consequence of it: and there is no greater argument of an imprudent man, than to gratify himself for the present in the doing of a thing, which will turn to his greater prejudice afterwards; especially if the future inconvenience be great and intolerable, as it is in the case we are speaking of. For eternal happiness or misery depends upon the actions of this present life, and according as we behave ourselves in this world, it will go well or ill with us for ever; so that this is a matter of vast importance, and deserves our most serious thoughts; and in matters of mighty consequence, a wise man will take all things into consideration, and look before him as far

as

as he can. And indeed this is the reaſon why things of great moment are ſaid to be things of conſequence, becauſe great things depend and are likely to follow upon them: and then ſurely that is the greateſt concernment, upon which not only the happineſs of this preſent life, but our happineſs to all eternity does depend; and if the good and bad actions of this life be of that conſequence to us, it is fit every man ſhould conſider what he does, and whither the courſe of life he is engaged or about to engage in, will lead him at laſt. For this is true wiſdom, to look to the end of things, and to think ſeriouſly beforehand, what is likely to be the event of ſuch an action, of ſuch a courſe of life: if we ſerve GOD faithfully and do his will, what will be the conſequence of that to us in this world, and the other: and on the other hand, if we live wickedly, and allow ourſelves in any unlawful and vicious practice, what will be the end of that courſe.

And to any man that conſults the law of his own nature, or the will of GOD revealed in ſcripture, nothing can be plainer than what will be the end of theſe ſeveral ways. GOD hath plainly told us, and our own conſciences will tell us the ſame, that "if we "do well, we ſhall be accepted" of GOD, and rewarded by him: but if we do ill, "the end of theſe things "is death;" that "indignation and wrath, tribulati-"on and anguiſh will be upon every ſoul of man "that doth evil; but honour and glory and peace "to every man that doth good, in the day when "GOD ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by JESUS "CHRIST, according to the goſpel."

So that GOD hath given us a plain proſpect of the different iſſues of a virtuous and a wicked life, and there wants nothing but conſideration to make us to

SERM. CLXXII.

attend to these things, and to lay them seriously to heart. For while men are inconsiderate, they go on stupidly in an evil way, and are not sensible of the danger of their present course, because they do not attend to the consequence of it: but when their eyes are once opened by consideration, they cannot but be sadly apprehensive of the mischief they are running themselves upon. If men would take but a serious and impartial view of their lives and actions, if they would consider the tendency of a sinful course, and whither it will bring them at last; if the vicious and dissolute man would but look about him, and consider how many have been ruined in that very way that he is in, how many lye "slain and wounded "in it; that it is the way to hell, and leads down "to the chambers of death;" the serious thought of this could not but check him in his course, and make him resolve upon a better life. If men were wise, they would consider the consequence of their actions, and upon consideration would resolve upon that which they are convinced is best. I proceed to the

III. Thing I propounded, which was, that consideration of the consequence of our actions is an excellent means to prevent the mischiefs, which otherwise we should run into. And this is necessarily implied in the wish here in the text, that if we would but consider these things, they might be prevented. For how can any man, who hath any love or regard for himself, any tenderness for his own interest and happiness, see hell and destruction before him, which, if he hold on in his evil course, will certainly swallow him up, and yet venture to go on in his sins? Can any man that plainly beholds misery hastening towards him "like an armed man, and destruction "coming upon him as a whirlwind," think himself unconcerned

unconcerned to prevent it and flie from it? The moſt dull and ſtupid creatures will ſtart back upon the ſight of preſent danger. Balaam's aſs, when ſhe ſaw the angel of the LORD ſtanding in the way, with his ſword drawn ready to ſmite her, ſtarts aſide, and could not be urged on. Now GOD hath given us, not only ſenſe to apprehend a preſent evil, but reaſon and conſideration to look before us, and to diſcover dangers at a diſtance, to apprehend them as certainly, and with as clear a conviction of the reality of them, as if they threatened us the next moment: and will any conſiderate man, who hath calculated the dangerous events of ſin, and the dreadful effects of GOD's wrath upon ſinners, go on to "provoke "the LORD to jealouſy, as if he were ſtronger than "he?" It is not to be imagined, but that if men would ſeriouſly conſider what ſin is, and what ſhall be the ſad portion of ſinners hereafter, they would reſolve upon a better courſe. Would any man live in the luſts of the fleſh, and of intemperance, or out of covetouſneſs defraud or oppreſs his neighbour, did he ſeriouſly conſider, that "GOD is the "avenger of ſuch;" and that "becauſe of theſe "things the wrath of GOD comes upon the chil-"dren of diſobedience."

I ſhould have great hopes of mens repentance and reformation, if they could but once be brought to conſideration: for in moſt men it is not ſo much a poſitive diſbelief of the truth, as inadvertency and want of conſideration, that makes them to go on ſo ſecurely in a ſinful courſe. Would but men conſider what ſin is, and what will be the fearful conſequence of it, probably in this world, but moſt certainly in the other, they could not chuſe but fly from it as the greateſt evil in the world.

And

SERM. CLXXII.

And to ſhew what power and influence conſideration will probably have to bring men to repentance, and a change of their lives, I remember to have ſomewhere met with a very remarkable ſtory, of one that had a ſon that took bad courſes, and would not be reclaimed by all the good counſel his father could give him; at laſt coming to his father, who lay upon his death-bed, to beg his bleſſing, his father inſtead of upbraiding him with his bad life, and undutiful carriage toward him, ſpake kindly to him, and told him he had but one thing to deſire of him, that every day he would retire and ſpend one quarter of an hour alone by himſelf; which he promiſed his father faithfully to do, and made it good. After a while it grew tedious to him, to ſpend even ſo little time in ſuch bad and uneaſy company, and he began to bethink himſelf, for what reaſon his father ſhould ſo earneſtly deſire of him to do ſo odd a thing for his ſake, and his mind preſently ſuggeſted to him, that it was to enforce him to conſideration; wiſely judging that if by any means he could but bring him to that, he would ſoon reform his life and become a new man. And the thing had its deſired effect; for after a very little conſideration, he took up a firm reſolution to change the courſe of his life, and was true to it all his days. I cannot anſwer for the truth of the ſtory, but for the moral of it I will; namely, that conſideration is one of the beſt and moſt likely means in the world, to bring a bad man to a better mind. I now come to the

IV. and laſt particular, namely, that the want of this conſideration is one of the greateſt cauſes of mens ruin. And this likewiſe is implied in the text; and the reaſon why GOD does ſo vehemently deſire that men would be wiſe and conſider, is, becauſe ſo many

are

are ruined and undone for want of it. This is the desperate folly of mankind, that they seldom think seriously of the consequence of their actions, and least of all of such as are of greatest concernment to them, and have the chief influence upon their eternal condition. They do not consider what mischief and inconvenience a wicked life may plunge them into in this world, what trouble and disturbance it may give them when they come to die; what horror and confusion it may fill them withal when they are leaving this world, and passing into eternity; and what intolerable misery and torment it may bring upon them to all eternity. Did men ponder and lay to heart death and judgment, heaven and hell; and would they but let their thoughts dwell upon these things, it is not credible that the generality of men could lead such profane and impious, such lewd and dissolute, such secure and careless lives as they do.

Would but a man frequently entertain his mind with such thoughts as these; I must shortly die and leave this world, and then all the pleasures and enjoyments of it will be to me as if they had never been, only that the remembrance of them, and the ill use I have made of them, will be very bitter and grievous to me; after all, death will transmit me out of this world, into a quite different state and scene of things, into the presence of that great and terrible, that inflexible and impartial judge, who will "ren-"der to every man according to his works;" and then all the evils which I have done in this life, will rise up in judgment against me, and fill me with everlasting confusion, in that great assembly of men and angels, will banish me from the presence of GOD, and all the happiness which flows from it, and procure a dreadful sentence of unspeakable misery and torment

SERM. CLXXII.

torment to be paſt upon me, which I can never get reverſed, nor yet ever be able to ſtand under the weight of it. If men would but enter into the ſerious conſideration of theſe things, and purſue theſe thoughts to ſome iſſue and concluſion, they would take up other reſolutions; and I verily believe, that the want of this hath ruined more than even infidelity itſelf. And this I take to be the meaning of that queſtion in the Pſalmiſt, "Have all the workers of iniquity "no knowledge?" that is, no conſideration; intimating that if they had, they would do better.

All that now remains, is to perſuade men to apply their hearts to this piece of wiſdom, to look before them, and to think ſeriouſly of the conſequence of their actions, what will be the final iſſue of that courſe of life they are engaged in; and if they continue in it, what will become of them hereafter, what will become of them for ever.

And here I might apply this text, as GOD here does to the people of Iſrael, to the publick condition of this nation, which is not ſo very unlike to that of the people of Iſrael: for GOD ſeems to have choſen this nation for his more peculiar people, and hath exerciſed a very particular providence towards us, in conducting us through that wilderneſs of confuſion, in which we have been wandring for the ſpace of above forty years; and when things were come to the laſt extremity, and we ſeemed to ſtand upon the very brink of ruin, "Then (as it is ſaid of the people of Iſrael, ver. 36. of this chapter) "GOD "repented himſelf for his ſervants, when he ſaw "their power was gone:" that is, that they were utterly unable to help themſelves, and to work their own deliverance. And it may be ſaid of us, as Moſes does of that people, chap. xxxiii. 29.

"Happy

" Happy art thou, O Iſrael, O people ſaved by the " LORD, the ſhield of thy help, and who is the " ſword of thy excellency!" Never did any nation ſtruggle with, and get through ſo many and ſo great difficulties, as we have ſeveral times done.

And I fear we have behaved ourſelves towards GOD, not much better than the people of Iſrael did, but like Jeſurun, after many deliverances and great mercies, " have waxed fat and kicked, have forſaken " the GOD that made us, and little eſteemed the " rock of our ſalvation;" by which we have " provoked the LORD to jealouſy," and have as it were forced him to multiply his judgments, and to ſpend his arrows upon us, and " to hide his face from " us, to ſee what our end will be;" ſo that we have reaſon to fear, that GOD would have brought utter ruin and deſtruction upon us, and " ſcattered us in- " to corners, and made the remembrance of us to " have ceaſed from among men, had he not feared " the wrath of the enemy, and leſt the adverſaries " ſhould have behaved themſelves ſtrangely, and leſt " they ſhould ſay, our hand is high, and the LORD " hath not done all this;" that is, leſt they ſhould aſcribe this juſt vengeance of GOD upon a ſinful and unthankful nation to the goodneſs and righteouſneſs of their own cauſe, and to the favour and aſſiſtance of the idols and falſe gods whom they worſhipped, to the patronage and aid of the virgin Mary and the ſaints; to whom, contrary to the will and command of the true GOD, they had offer'd up ſo many prayers and vows, and paid the greateſt part of their religious worſhip. But " the LORD hath ſhewn " himſelf greater than all gods, and in the things " wherein they dealt proudly, that he is above them:

E 2 M. CLXXII.

" for our rock is not as their rock, even our enemies " themſelves being judges."

And we have been too like the people of Iſrael in other reſpects alſo, ſo fickle and inconſtant, that after great deliverances we are apt preſently to murmur and be diſcontented, to grow ſick of our own happineſs, and " to turn back in our hearts into Egypt;" ſo that GOD may complain of us, as he does of his people Iſrael, that nothing that he could do would bring them to conſideration, and make them better, neither his mercies nor his judgments. Iſa. i. 2, 3. " Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! For the " LORD hath ſpoken; I have nouriſhed and brought " up children, but they have rebelled againſt me. " The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's " crib: but Iſrael doth not know, my people doth " not conſider." And ſo likewiſe he complains, that his judgments had no effect upon them, ver. 5. " Why ſhould ye be ſmitten any more? Ye will " revolt more and more." Well therefore may it be ſaid of us, as it was of them in the verſe before the text, " they are a nation void of knowledge, " neither is there any underſtanding in them." And the wiſh that follows in the text is as ſeaſonable for us as it was for them, " O that they were wiſe, that " they underſtood this, that they would conſider " their latter end!"

And by parity of reaſon, this may likewiſe be applied to particular perſons, and to perſuade every one of us to a ſerious conſideration of the final iſſue and conſequence of our actions, I will only offer theſe two arguments.

I. That conſideration is the proper act of reaſonable creatures, and that whereby we ſhew ourſelves men. So the prophet intimates, Iſa. xlvi. 8. "Re-

" member

" member this, and ſhew yourſelves men; bring it " again to mind, O ye tranſgreſſors!" that is, conſider it well, think of it again and again, ye that run on ſo furiouſly in a ſinful courſe, what the end and iſſue of theſe things will be. If ye do not do this, you do not " ſhew yourſelves men," you do not act like reaſonable creatures, to whom it is peculiar to propoſe to themſelves ſome end and deſign of their actions; but rather like " brute creatures, " which have no underſtanding," and act only by a natural inſtinct, without any conſideration of the end of their actions, or of the means conducing to it.

II. Whether we conſider it or not, our latter end will come; and all thoſe diſmal conſequences of a ſinful courſe, which GOD hath ſo plainly threatened, and our own conſciences do ſo much dread, will certainly overtake us at laſt; and we cannot, by not thinking of theſe things, ever prevent or avoid them. Death will come, and after that the judgment, and an irreverſible doom will paſs upon us, according to all the evil that we have done, and all the good that we have neglected to do in this life, under the heavy weight and preſſure whereof we muſt lye groaning, and bewailing ourſelves to everlaſting ages.

God now exerciſeth his mercy and patience and long-ſuffering towards us, in expectation of our amendment; he reprieves us on purpoſe that we may repent, and in hopes that we will at laſt conſider and grow wiſer; for " he is not willing that any ſhould " periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance:" but if we will trifle away this day of GOD's grace and patience, if we will not conſider and bethink ourſelves, there is another day that will certainly come, " that great and terrible day of the LORD, " in which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great

" noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent " heat; the earth alſo, and the works that are there- " in ſhall be burnt up."

" Seeing then all theſe things ſhall be," let us conſider ſeriouſly " what manner of perſons we ought to " be in all holy converſation and godlineſs, waiting " for and haſtening unto the coming of the day of " GOD; to whom be glory now and for ever."

SERMON CLXXIII.

The danger of impenitence, where the goſpel is preached.

MATT. xi. 21, 22.

Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethſaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes. But I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

SERM. CLXXIII.

AFTER our bleſſed SAVIOUR had inſtructed, and ſent forth his diſciples, he himſelf went abroad to preach unto the cities of Iſrael; particularly he ſpent much time in the cities of Galilee, Chorazin, and Bethſaida, and Capernaum, preaching the goſpel to them, and working many and great miracles among them; but with little or no ſucceſs: which was the cauſe of his denouncing this terrible woe againſt them, ver. 20. " Then began he to " upbraid the cities, wherein moſt of his mighty

" works

" works were done, because they repented not. Woe " unto thee Chorazin," &c. SERM. CLXXIII.

In which words our SAVIOUR declares the sad and miserable condition of those two cities, Chorazin and Bethsaida, which had neglected such an opportunity, and resisted and withstood such means of repentance, as would have effectually reclaimed the most wicked cities and people that can be instanced in any age, Tyre and Sidon and Sodom; and therefore he tells them, that their condition was much worse, and that they should fall under a heavier sentence at the day of judgment, than the people of those cities, whom they had always looked upon as the greatest sinners that ever were in the world. This is the plain meaning of the words in general; but yet there are some difficulties in them, which I shall endeavour to clear, and then proceed to raise such observations from them, as may be instructive and useful to us.

The difficulties are these:

I. What repentance is here spoken of; whether an external repentance, in shew and appearance only, or an inward and real and sincere repentance.

II. In what sense it is said, that " Tyre and Sidon " would have repented."

III. What is meant by their " would have repent- " ed long ago."

IV. How this assertion of our SAVIOUR, that miracles would have converted Tyre and Sidon, is reconcilable with that other saying of his, Luk. xvi. 31. in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, that " those who believed not Moses and the prophets, " neither would they be persuaded, though one rose " from the dead."

I. What repentance is here spoken of; whether a mere external and hypocritical repentance in shew and

SERM. CLXXIII.

and appearance only, or an inward and real and sincere repentance.

The reason of this doubt depends upon the different theories of divines, about the sufficiency of grace accompanying the outward means of repentance, and whether an irresistible degree of GOD's grace be necessary to repentance: for they who deny sufficient grace to accompany the outward means of repentance, and assert an irresistible degree of GOD's grace necessary to repentance, are forced to say, that our SAVIOUR here speaks of a mere external repentance: because if he spake of an inward and sincere repentance, then it must be granted, that sufficient inward grace did accompany the miracles that were wrought in Chorazin and Bethsaida, to bring men to repentance; because what was afforded to them, would have brought Tyre and Sidon to repentance. And that which would have effected a thing, cannot be denied to be sufficient; so that unless our SAVIOUR here speaks of a mere external repentance, either the outward means of repentance, as preaching and miracles, must be granted to be sufficient to bring men to repentance, without the inward operation of GOD's grace upon the minds of men; or else a sufficient degree of GOD's grace must be acknowledged to accompany the outward means of repentance. Again, if an irresistible degree of grace be necessary to true repentance, it is plain, Chorazin and Bethsaida had it not, because they did not repent; and yet without this Tyre and Sidon could not sincerely have repented; therefore our SAVIOUR here must speak of a mere external repentance. Thus some argue, as they do likewise concerning the repentance of Nineveh, making that also to be merely external, because they are loth to allow true repentance to heathens.

But

But it seems very plain, that our SAVIOUR does speak of an inward and true and sincere repentance; and therefore the doctrines that will not admit this, are not true. For our SAVIOUR speaks of the same kind of repentance, that he upbraided them with the want of, in the verse before the text. "Then began he "to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty "works were done, because they repented not;" that is, because they were not brought to a sincere repentance by his preaching, which was confirmed by such great miracles. It is true indeed, he mentions the outward signs and expressions of repentance, when he says, "they would have repented in sack-"cloth and ashes;" but not as excluding inward and real repentance, but supposing it, as is evident from what is said in the next verse, "It shall be more "tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judg-"ment, than for you:" for though an external and hypocritical repentance may prevail with GOD to put off temporal judgments, yet surely it will be but a very small, if any mitigation of our condemnation at the day of judgment: so that the repentance here spoken of cannot, without great violence to the scope and design of our SAVIOUR's argument, be understood only of an external shew and appearance of repentance.

II. The next difficulty to be cleared, is, in what sense it is here said, that "if the mighty works "which were done" by our SAVIOUR among the Jews, "had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they "would have repented."

Some to avoid the inconvenience which they apprehend to be in the more strict and literal sense of the words, look upon them as hyperbolical, as we say such a thing would move a stone, or the like, when we would express something to be very sad and grievous;

SERM. CXXLIII.

grievous; so here to aggravate the impenitence of the Jews, our SAVIOUR says, that they resisted those means of repentance, which one would think should almost have prevailed upon the greatest and most obdurate sinners that ever were; but not intending to affirm any such thing.

But there is no colour for this, if we consider that our SAVIOUR reasons from the supposition of such a thing, that therefore the case of Tyre and Sidon would really be "more tolerable at the day of judg-"ment than theirs;" because they would have repented, but the Jews did not.

Others perhaps understand the words too strictly, as if our SAVIOUR had spoken according to what he certainly foreknew would have happened to the people of Tyre and Sidon, if such miracles had been wrought among them. And no doubt but in that case GOD did certainly know what they would have done: but yet I should rather chuse to understand the words as spoken popularly, according to what in all human appearance and probability would have happened, if such external means of repentance, accompanied with an ordinary grace of GOD, had been afforded to them of Tyre and Sidon. And thus the old Latin interpreter seems to have understood the next words, "if the mighty works which have been "done in thee, had been done in Sodom, ἔμειναν ἄν," forte mansissent, "it would perhaps have remained "to this day, in all likelihood it had continued till "now." Much the same with that passage of the prophet, Ezek. iii. 5, 6. "Thou art not sent to a "people of a strange speech, and of a hard lan-"guage, but to the house of Israel: Surely had I "sent thee to them, they would have hearkened un-"to thee;" that is, in all probability they would,

there is little doubt to be made of the contrary. And this is sufficient foundation for our SAVIOUR's reasoning afterwards, that "it shall be more tolerable for "Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for "them." And if we may judge what they would have done before, by what they did afterward, there is more than probability for it: for we read in the 21st chapter of the Acts, ver. 3. and ver. 27. that the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon received the gospel, and kindly entertained St. Paul, when the Jews rejected them both. The

III. Thing to be cleared, is, what is meant by long ago; "they would have repented long ago."

Some understand this, as if our SAVIOUR had said, they would not have stood out so long against so much preaching, and so many miracles; but would at first have repented, long before our SAVIOUR gave over Chorazin and Bethsaida for obstinate and incorrigible sinners; they would not only have repented at last, but much sooner and without so much ado.

But this does not seem to be the meaning of the words; but our SAVIOUR seems to refer to those ancient times long ago, when the prophets denounced judgments against Tyre and Sidon, particularly the prophet Ezekiel; and to say, that if in those days the preaching of that prophet had been accompanied with such miracles as our SAVIOUR wrought in the cities of Galilee, Tyre and Sidon would in those days have repented.

The last and greatest difficulty of all is, how this assertion of our SAVIOUR, that miracles would have converted Tyre and Sidon, is reconcilable with that discourse of our SAVIOUR's, Luke xvi. in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, that "those

ERM. LXXIII. "who would not believe Moſes and the prophets, "would not have been perſuaded, though one had "roſe from the dead."

The true anſwer to which difficulty in ſhort is this; that when our SAVIOUR ſays, "if they be-"lieve not Moſes and the prophets, neither will "they be perſuaded though one roſe from the dead," he does not hereby weaken the force of miracles, or their aptneſs to convince men and bring them to repentance, but rather confirm it; becauſe Moſes and the prophets had the atteſtation of many and great miracles, and therefore there was no reaſon to think, that they who would not believe the writings and doctrine of Moſes and the prophets, which had the confirmation of ſo many miracles, and was owned by themſelves to have ſo, ſhould be wrought upon by one particular miracle, "the coming of one from "the dead, and ſpeaking unto them:" or however this might move and aſtoniſh them for the preſent, yet it was not likely that the grace of GOD ſhould concur with ſuch an extraordinary means, to render it effectual to their converſion and repentance, who had wilfully deſpiſed and obſtinately rejected that which had a much greater confirmation, than the diſcourſe of a man riſen from the dead, and was appointed by GOD for the ordinary and ſtanding means of bringing men to repentance. So that our SAVIOUR might with reaſon enough pronounce that Tyre and Sidon, who never had a ſtanding revelation of GOD to bring them to repentance, nor had rejected it, would upon miracles extraordinarily wrought among them, have repented; and yet deny it elſewhere to be likely, that they who rejected a ſtanding revelation of GOD, confirmed by miracles, which called them to repentance, would probably be brought

to

to repentance by a particular miracle; or that GOD should afford his grace to make it effectual for their repentance and salvation. SERM. CLXXIII.

The words being thus cleared, I come now to raise such observations from them, as may be instructive and useful to us.

I. I observe from this discourse of our SAVIOUR, that miracles are of great force and efficacy to bring men to repentance.

This our SAVIOUR's discourse here supposeth; otherwise their impenitence had not been so criminal and inexcusable upon that account, "that such "mighty works had been done among them," as would probably have prevailed upon some of the worst people that had been in the world; for such were the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, guilty of great covetousness and fraud, pride and luxury, the usual sins of places of great traffick and commerce: and such to be sure was Sodom; and yet our SAVIOUR tells us, that the miracles which he had wrought in the cities of Israel, would in all probability have brought those great sinners to repentance; namely, by bringing them to faith, and convincing them of the truth and divinity of that doctrine which he preached unto them, and which contains such powerful arguments to repentance and amendment of life.

II. I observe likewise from our SAVIOUR's discourse, that GOD is not always obliged to work miracles for the conversion of sinners. It is great goodness in him to afford sufficient means of repentance to men, as he did to Tyre and Sidon, in calling them to repentance by his prophet; though such miracles were not wrought among them, as GOD thought fit to accompany our SAVIOUR's preaching withal.

This I obſerve, to prevent a kind of bold and ſaucy objection, which ſome would perhaps be apt to make; if Tyre and Sidon would have repented, had ſuch miracles been wrought among them, as our SAVIOUR wrought in Chorazin and Bethſaida, why were they not wrought, that they might have repented? To which it is ſufficient anſwer to ſay, that GOD is not obliged to do all that is poſſible to be done, to reclaim men from their ſins; he is not obliged to overpower their wills, and to work irreſiſtibly upon their minds, which he can eaſily do; he is not obliged to work miracles for every particular man's conviction; nor where he vouchſafeth to do this, is he obliged always to work the greateſt and moſt convincing miracles; his goodneſs will not ſuffer him to omit what is neceſſary and ſufficient to bring men to repentance and happineſs, nay beyond this he many times does more; but it is ſufficient to vindicate the juſtice and goodneſs of GOD, that he is not wanting to us, in affording the means neceſſary to reclaim us from our ſins, and to bring us to goodneſs. That which is properly our part, is to make uſe of thoſe means which GOD affords us to become better, and not to preſcribe to him how much he ſhould do for us; to be thankful that he hath done ſo much, and not to find fault with him for having done no more.

III. I obſerve farther from our SAVIOUR's diſcourſe, that the external means of repentance which GOD affords to men, do ſuppoſe an inward grace of GOD accompanying them, ſufficiently enabling men to repent, if it be not their own fault; I ſay a ſufficient grace of GOD accompanying the outward means of repentance, till by our wilful and obſtinate neglect and reſiſtance and oppoſition of ths grace, we provoke God to withdraw it from the means, or

else to withdraw both the grace and the means from us; otherwise impenitence after such external means afforded, would be no new and special fault. For if the concurrence of GOD's grace with the outward means be necessary to work repentance, then the impenitence of those to whom this grace is not afforded, which yet is necessary to repentance, is neither any new sin, nor any new aggravation of their former impenitence. For no man can imagine that the just GOD will charge men with new guilt, and increase their condemnation, for remaining impenitent in such circumstances in which it is impossible for them to repent.

IV. I observe from this discourse of our SAVIOUR's, that an irresistible degree of grace is not necessary to repentance, nor commonly afforded to those who do repent. GOD may where he pleaseth, without injury to any man, over-power his will, and stop him in his course, and hinder him from making himself miserable, and by an irresistible right convince him of his error and the evil of his ways, and bring him to a better mind: But this GOD seldom does; and when he does it, it is very probable it is not so much for their own sakes, as to make them instruments of good to others. Thus by a secret but overpowering influence he over-ruled the disciples to follow our SAVIOUR, and to leave their calling and relations, and all their temporal concernments to do it. But one of the most remarkable examples of this extraordinary grace of GOD, is St. Paul, who was violently stopt in his course of persecuting the Christians, and convinced of his sin, and brought over to christianity, in a very extraordinary and forcible manner. And of this miraculous and extraordinary conversion, GOD himself gives this account, "that he "was a chosen vessel unto him, to bear his name

"before

SERM. CLXXIII.

" before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of " Iſrael," Acts. ix. 15. And St. Paul tells us, Gal. i. 15, 16. " That for this end GOD had ſeparated " him from his mother's womb, and called him by " his grace, and revealed his Son to him" in that extraordinary manner, " that he might preach him " among the heathen."

But generally GOD does not bring men thus to repentance; nor is it neceſſary he ſhould. For if an irreſiſtible degree of grace were always neceſſary to bring men to repentance, there could be no difference between the impenitence of Chorazin and Bethſaida, and of Tyre and Sidon. For according to this doctrine of the neceſſity of irreſiſtible grace to the converſion of every man, it is evident, that Tyre and Sidon neither could, nor would have repented, without an irreſiſtible degree of GOD's grace, accompanying the outward means of repentance which he afforded to them; becauſe ſuch a degree of grace is neceſſary to repentance, and without it, it is impoſſible for any man to repent. But then it is as plain on the contrary, that if Chorazin and Bethſaida had had the ſame irreſiſtible degree of GOD's grace, together with the outward means of repentance afforded to them, that they would have repented as certainly as Tyre and Sidon. Where then is the reaſon of upbraiding the impenitence of the one, more than of the other? Where the aggravation of the one's guilt above the other? Where the juſtice of puniſhing the impenitence of Chorazin and Bethſaida, more than theirs of Tyre and Sidon? For upon this ſuppoſition, they muſt either have repented both alike, or have been both equally impenitent. The ſum of what I have ſaid, is this, that if no man does, nor can repent, without ſuch a degree of GOD's grace as

cannot

cannot be resisted, no man's repentance is commendable, nor is one man's impenitence more blameable than another's; Chorazin and Bethsaida can be in no more fault for continuing impenitent, than Tyre and Sidon were. For either this irresistible grace is afforded to men or not: if it be, their repentance is necessary, and they cannot help it; if it be not, their repentance is impossible, and consequently their impenitence is necessary, and they cannot help it neither. SERM. CLXXIII.

V. I observe from the main scope of our SAVIOUR's discourse, that the sins and impenitence of men receive their aggravation, and consequently shall have their punishment proportionable to the opportunities and means of repentance, which those persons have enjoyed and neglected.

For what is here said of miracles, is by equality of reason likewise true of all other advantages and means of repentance and salvation. The reason why miracles will be such an aggravation of the condemnation of men is, because they are so proper and powerful a means to convince them of the truth and divinity of that doctrine which calls them to repentance. So that all those means which GOD affords to us of the knowledge of our duty, of conviction of the evil and danger of a sinful course, are so many helps and motives to repentance, and consequently will prove so many aggravations of our sin and punishment, if we continue impenitent. The

VI. and last observation, and which naturally follows from the former, is this, that the case of those who are impenitent under the gospel, is of all others the most dangerous, and their damnation shall be heaviest and most severe.

And this brings the case of these cities here in the text home to ourselves. For in truth there is no material

SERM. CLXXIII.

terial difference between the caſe of Chorazin and Bethſaida and Capernaum, and of ourſelves in this city and nation, who enjoy the clear light of the goſpel, with all the freedom, and all the advantages that any people ever did. The mercies of GOD to this nation have been very great, eſpecially in bringing us out of that darkneſs and ſuperſtition, which covered this weſtern part of the world; in reſcuing us from that great corruption and degeneracy of the chriſtian religion which prevailed among us, by ſo early and ſo regular a reformation; and in continuing ſo long this great bleſſing to us. The judgments of GOD have been likewiſe very great upon us for our ſins: "GOD hath manifeſted himſelf by "terrible things in righteouſneſs;" our eyes have ſeen many and diſmal calamities in the ſpace of a few years, which call loudly upon us to repent and turn to GOD. GOD hath afforded us the moſt effectual means of repentance, and hath taken the moſt effectual courſe of bringing us to it. And though our bleſſed SAVIOUR do not ſpeak to us in perſon, nor do we at this day ſee miracles wrought among us, as the Jews did; yet we have the doctrine which our bleſſed SAVIOUR preached, faithfully tranſmitted to us, and a credible relation of the miracles wrought for the confirmation of that doctrine, and many other arguments to perſuade us of the truth of it, which thoſe to whom our SAVIOUR ſpake had not, nor could not then have, taken from the accompliſhing of our SAVIOUR's predictions, after his death; the ſpeedy propagation and wonderful ſucceſs of this doctrine in the world, by weak and inconſiderable means, againſt all the power and oppoſition of the world; the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the diſperſion of the Jewiſh nation, according to our SAVIOUR's prophecy;

phecy; besides many more that might be mentioned. And which is a mighty advantage to us, we are free from those prejudices against the person of our SAVIOUR and his doctrine, which the Jews, by the reverence which they bare to their rulers and teachers, were generally possess'd withal; we are brought up in the belief of it, and have drunk it in by education; and if we believe it, as we all profess to do, we have all the obligation and all the arguments to repentance, which the Jews could possibly have from the miracles which they saw; for they were means of repentance to them no otherwise than as they brought them to the belief of our SAVIOUR's doctrine, which called them to repentance.

So that if we continue impenitent, the same woe is denounced against us that is against Chorazin and Bethsaida; and we may be said with Capernaum, "to be lifted up to heaven," by the enjoyment of the most excellent means and advantages of salvation, that any people ever did, which if we neglect, and still continue wicked and impenitent under them, we may justly fear, that with them "we shall be thrown "down to hell," and have our place in the lowest part of that dismal dungeon, and in the very center of that fiery furnace.

Never was there greater cause to upbraid the impenitence of any people, than of us, considering the means and opportunities which we enjoy; and never had any greater reason to fear a severer doom, than we have. Impenitence in a heathen is a great sin; else how should GOD judge the world? But GOD takes no notice of that, in comparison of the impenitence of Christians, who enjoy the gospel, and are convinced of the truth, and upon the greatest reason in the world profess to believe it. We Christians

have all the obligations to repentance, that reaſon and revelation, nature and grace can lay upon us. Art thou convinced that thou haſt ſinned, and done that which is contrary to thy duty, and thereby provoked the wrath of GOD, and incenſed his juſtice againſt thee? As thou art a man, and upon the ſtock of natural principles, thou art obliged to repentance. The ſame light of reaſon which diſcovers to thee the errors of thy life, and challengeth thee for thy impiety and intemperance, for thy injuſtice and oppreſſion, for thy pride and paſſion; the ſame natural conſcience which accuſeth thee of any miſcarriages, does oblige thee to be ſorry for them, "to "turn from thy evil ways, and to break off thy "ſins by repentance." For nothing can be more unreaſonable, than for a man to know a fault, and yet not think himſelf bound to be ſorry for it; to be convinced of the evil of his ways, and not to think himſelf obliged by that very conviction, to turn from it and forſake it. If there be any ſuch thing as a natural "law written in mens hearts," which the apoſtle tells us the heathens had, it is impoſſible to imagine, but that the law, which obligeth men not to tranſgreſs, ſhould oblige them to repentance in caſe of tranſgreſſion. And this every man in the world is bound to, though he had never ſeen the bible, nor heard of the name of CHRIST. And the revelation of the goſpel doth not ſuperſede this obligation, but adds new ſtrength and force to it: and by how much this duty of repentance is more clearly revealed by our bleſſed SAVIOUR in the goſpel; by how much the arguments which the goſpel uſeth to perſuade men, and encourage them to repentance, are greater and more powerful; by ſo much is the impenitence of thoſe who live under the goſpel the more inexcuſable. Had

SERM. CLXXIII.

Had we only some faint hopes of GOD's mercy, a doubtful opinion and weak persuasion of the rewards and punishments of another world; yet we have a law within us, which upon the probability of these considerations would oblige us to repentance. Indeed if men were assured upon good grounds, that there would be no future rewards and punishments; then the sanction of the law were gone, and it would lose it's force and obligation: or if we did despair of the mercy of GOD, and had good reason to think repentance impossible, or that it would do us no good; in that case there would be no sufficient motive and argument to repentance: for no man can return to his duty, without returning to the love of GOD and goodness; and no man can return to the love of GOD, who believes that he bears an implacable hatred against him, and is resolved to make him miserable for ever. During this persuasion no man can repent. And this seems to be the reason, why the devils continue impenitent.

But the heathens were not without hopes of GOD's mercy, and upon those small hopes which they had, they encouraged themselves into repentance; as you may see in the instance of the Ninevites, "Let "them turn every one from his evil ways, and from "the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell, "if GOD will turn and repent, and turn away from "his fierce anger, that we perish not?" Jonah iii. 8, 9. But if we, who have the clearest discoveries, and the highest assurance of this, who profess to believe that GOD hath declared himself placable to all mankind, that "he is in CHRIST reconciling the "world to himself," and that upon our repentance "he "will not impute our sins to us;" if we, to whom "the wrath of GOD is revealed from heaven, against

SERM. LXXIII.

" all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men," and to whom " life and immortality are brought to light " by the goſpel;" if after all this, we ſtill go on in an impenitent courſe, what ſhall we be able to plead in excuſe of ourſelves at that great day? " The men " of Nineveh ſhall riſe up in judgment" againſt ſuch an impenitent generation, and condemn it; becauſe they repented upon the terror of lighter threatenings, and upon the encouragement of weaker hopes.

And therefore it concerns us, who call ourſelves Chriſtians, and enjoy the clear revelation of the goſpel, to look about us, and take heed how we continue in an evil courſe. For if we remain impenitent, after all the arguments which the goſpel, ſuper-added to the light of nature, affords to us to bring us to repentance, it ſhall not only " be more tolerable for " the men of Nineveh, but for Tyre and Sidon, for " Sodom and Gomorrah," the moſt wicked and impenitent heathens, " at the day of judgment, " than for us." For becauſe we have ſtronger arguments, and more powerful encouragements to repentance, than they had, if we do not repent, we ſhall meet with a heavier doom, and a fiercer damnation. The heathen world had many excuſes to plead for themſelves, which we have not. " The " times of that ignorance GOD winked at: but now " commands all men every where to repent; becauſe " he hath appointed a day, in the which he will " judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man " whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given " aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him " from the dead."

SER-

SERMON CLXXIV.

Of the immortality of the ſoul, as diſcovered by nature, and by revelation.

2 TIM. i. 10.

But is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, *who hath aboliſhed death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the goſpel.*

SERM. CLXXIV. The firſt ſermon on this text.

THE deſign of the apoſtle in theſe two epiſtles to Timothy, is to direct him how he ought to demean himſelf, in the office which he bore in the church; which he does in the firſt epiſtle: and to encourage him in his work; which he does here in the ſecond: in which, after his uſual ſalutation, he endeavours to arm him againſt the fear of thoſe perſecutions, and the ſhame of thoſe reproaches, which would probably attend him in the work of the Goſpel, ver. 8. "Be not thou there-
"fore aſhamed of the teſtimony of our LORD, nor
"of me his priſoner; but be thou partaker of the
"afflictions of the goſpel, according to the power
"of GOD, who hath ſaved us, and called us with an
"holy calling;" as if he had ſaid, the GOD whom thou ſerveſt in this employment, and by whoſe power thou art ſtrengthened, is he that "hath ſaved
"and called us with an holy calling," that is, it is he who by JESUS CHRIST hath brought ſalvation to us, and called us to this holy profeſſion; "not ac-
"cording to our works," that is, not that we by any thing that we have done, have deſerved this at his

his hand, but "according to his own purpose and "grace," that is, according to his own gracious purpose, "which was given us in CHRIST before the "world began," that is, which from all eternity he decreed and determined to accomplish by JESUS CHRIST; "but is now made manifest by the appear-"ing of our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST;" that is, which gracious purpose of his is now clearly discovered by our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST's coming into the world, "who hath abolished death, and hath brought "life and immortality to light, through the gospel."

Which words express to us two happy effects of CHRIST's appearance: first, "the abolishing of "death;" and, secondly, "the bringing of life and "immortality to light." In the handling of these words, I shall,

First, Open to you the meaning of the several expressions in the text.

Secondly, Shew what our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST did towards "the abolishing of death, and "bringing to light life and immortality."

For the first, I shall shew,

I. What is here meant by "the appearing of "JESUS CHRIST."

II. What by the "abolishing of death."

III. What by "bringing to light life and im-"mortality."

I. What is here meant by "the appearing of our "SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." The scripture useth several phrases to express this thing to us. As it was the gracious design of GOD the Father, so it is called the giving of his Son, or sending him into the world. John iii. 16. "GOD so loved the world, "that he gave his only begotten Son." Gal. iv. 4. "In the fulness of time GOD sent his Son." As it

was the voluntary undertaking of GOD the Son, so it is called his coming into the world. In relation to his incarnation, whereby he was made visible to us in his body, and likewise in reference to the obscure promises, and prophecies, and types of the old testament, it is called his manifestation or appearance. So the apostle expresseth it, 1 John iii. 5. "Ye know that he was manifested to take away "our sins;" by which we are to understand primarily his incarnation, his appearing in our nature, whereby he became visible to us. As he was GOD, he could not appear to us, dwelling in light and glory, not to be approached by us in this state of mortality, and therefore he clothed himself in flesh, that he might appear and become manifest to us.

I say, by his appearing we are primarily to understand his incarnation: yet not only that, but likewise all that was consequent upon this, the actions of his life, and his death and resurrection; because all these concur to the producing of these happy effects mentioned in the text.

II. What is meant by the abolishing of death. By this we are not to understand, that CHRIST by his appearance hath rooted death out of the world, so that men are no longer subject to it. For we see that even good men, and those who are partakers of the benefits of CHRIST's death, are still subject to the common law of mortality: but this expression of CHRIST's having abolished death, signifies the conquest and victory which CHRIST hath gained over death in his own person, in that after he was dead, and laid in his grave, he rose again from the dead, he freed himself from the bands of death, and broke loose from the fetters of it, they not being able to hold him, as the expression is, Acts ii. 24. and consequently

SERM. CLXXIV.

quently hath, by this victory over it, given us an assurance of a resurrection to a better life. For since CHRIST hath abolished death, and triumphed over it, and thereby over the powers of darkness: (for so the apostle tells us, that by his death, and that which followed it, his resurrection from the dead, "he hath destroyed him that had the power of "death, that is, the devil." The devil, he contributed all he could to the death of CHRIST, by tempting Judas to betray him, and engaging all his instruments in the procuring of it; as he had before brought in death into the world, by tempting the first man to sin, upon which death insued; thus far he prevailed, and thought his kingdom was safe, having procured the death of him who was so great an enemy to it: but CHRIST, by rising from the dead, defeats the devil of his design, and plainly conquers him, who had arrogated to himself the power of death;) I say, since CHRIST hath thus vanquished death, and triumphed over it, and him that had the power of it, death hath lost it's dominion, and CHRIST hath taken the whole power and disposal of it; as you find, Rev. i. 18. "I am "he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am "alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and "of death." Now CHRIST hath not only thus conquered death for himself, but likewise for all those who believe on him; so that death shall not be able to keep them for ever under it's power: but CHRIST, by the same power whereby he raised up himself from the dead, will also "quicken our mortal bodies," and raise them up to a new life; for he keeps "the "keys of hell and death;" and as a reward of his sufferings and submission to death, he hath power conferred upon him, "to give eternal life to as many as

"he

" he pleases." In this sense, death, though it be not quite chased out of the world, yet it is virtually and in effect " abolished by the appearance of JESUS " CHRIST," having in a great measure lost it's power and dominion; and since CHRIST hath assured us of a final rescue from it, the power of it is rendered insignificant and inconsiderable, and the sting and terror of it is taken away. So the apostle tells us in the forementioned place, Heb. ii. 14, 15. that CHRIST having " by death destroyed him who had the " power of death, that is, the devil, he hath deli- " vered those who through fear of death, were all " their life-time subject to bondage." And not only the power and terror of death is for the present in a great measure taken away; but it shall at last be utterly destroyed. So the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. xv. 26. " The last enemy that shall be destroyed is " death;" which makes the apostle, in the latter end of this chapter, to break forth into that triumph, ver. 54, 55. " So when this corruptible shall have " put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have " put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass " the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in " victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, " where is thy victory?"

III. What is here meant by " bringing life and " immortality to light." Life and immortality, is here by a frequent Hebraism put for immortal life; as also immediately before the text, you find purpose and grace, put for GOD's gracious purpose. The phrase of bringing to light, is spoken of things which were before either wholly or in a great measure hid, either were not at all discovered before, or not so clearly. Now because the heathens by the light of nature, had some probable conjectures and hopes con-

SERM. CLXXIV.

cerning another life after this, they were in ſome meaſure perſuaded, that when men died, they were not wholly extinguiſhed, but did paſs into another world, and did there receive rewards ſuited to their carriage and demeanour in this life; and becauſe the Jews alſo, before CHRIST, had theſe natural ſuggeſtions and hopes ſtrengthened and confirmed by revelations, which GOD made unto them under the old teſtament, therefore we cannot underſtand this phraſe of CHRIST's, "bringing immortal life to light" abſolutely, as if it were wholly a new diſcovery, which the world had no apprehenſion of before; but only comparatively, as a thing which was now rendered, by the coming of CHRIST into the world, incomparably more evident and manifeſt. *Quicquid enim philoſophi, quicquid rabbini eâ de re dicunt, tenebræ ſunt, ſi ad evangelii lucem comparentur*; "whatever the philoſophers, whatever the rabbins ſay of "this matter, is but darkneſs, compared to the "clear light and revelation of the goſpel." I proceed to the

Second thing I propoſed, viz. to ſhew what CHRIST's coming into the world hath done towards "the aboliſhing of death," and "bringing of life "and immortality to light." I ſhall ſpeak diſtinctly to theſe two.

I. What CHRIST's appearance and coming into the world hath done towards "the aboliſhing of "death," or how "death is aboliſhed by the ap"pearance of CHRIST." I have already ſhewn in the explication, that this phraſe, "the aboliſhing of "death," ſignifies the conqueſt which he made over death in his own perſon for himſelf; the fruit of which victory redounds to us. For in that CHRIST by his divine power did conquer it, and ſet himſelf

free from the bands of it, this shews that the power of it is now brought into other hands, that "CHRIST "hath the keys of hell and death;" so that though the devil, by tempting to sin, brought death into the world, yet it shall not be in his power to keep men always under the power of it; and hereby the terror of this great enemy is in a good measure taken away, and he shall at last be totally destroyed, by the same hand that hath already given him his mortal wound.

Now this is said to be done by "the appearing of "JESUS CHRIST," for as much as by his coming into the world, and taking our nature upon him, he became capable of encountering this enemy and overcoming him, in such a manner as might give us assurance of a final victory over it, and for the present comfort and encourage us against the fears of it. For,

1. By taking our nature upon him, he became subject to the frailties and miseries of mortality, and liable to the suffering of death, by which expiation of sin was made. Sin was the cause of death. So the apostle tells us, "by man sin entered into the world, "and death by sin, so that death came upon all." Now the way to cure this malady which was come upon our nature, and to remove this great mischief which was come into the world, is by taking away the meritorious cause of it, which is the guilt of sin. Now this CHRIST hath taken away by his death. CHRIST, that he might abolish death, hath appeared for "the abolition of sin." So the apostle tells us, Heb. ix. 26, 27, 28. "But now once in the end of "the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by "the sacrifice of himself, εἰς ἀθέτησιν ἁμαρτίας, for "the abolishing of sin:" and to shew that this was intended as a remedy of the great mischief and in-

SERM. CLXXIV.

convenience of mortality, which ſin had brought upon mankind, the apoſtle immediately adds in the next verſe, that "as it is appointed unto all men "once to die, ſo CHRIST was once offered to bear "the ſins of many:" and by this means the ſting of death is taken away, and death in effect conquered; the conſideration of which makes the apoſtle break out into that thankful triumph, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. "O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, "where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin: "But thanks be to GOD, which giveth us the vic-"tory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

2. As CHRIST by taking our nature upon him became capable of ſuffering death, and thereby making expiation for ſin; ſo by dying he became capable of riſing again from the dead, whereby he hath gained a perfect victory and conqueſt over death and the powers of darkneſs. And this account the apoſtle gives us of CHRIST's taking our nature upon him, as being one of the principal ends and deſigns of it, Heb. ii. 14, 15, 16. "For as much then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf "likewiſe took part of the ſame, that through death "he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, "that is, the devil;" that is, that by taking our nature upon him, he might be capable of encountering this enemy, that is, of encountering death in his own territories, and beating him in his own quarters; and by riſing out of his grave, he might give us full and comfortable aſſurance of the poſſibility of being reſcued from the power of the grave, and recovered out of the jaws of death. And therefore the wiſdom of GOD pitched upon this way, as that which was moſt fit and proper to encourage and bear us up againſt the terrors of the enemy; and by giving us a lively

SERM. CLXXIV.

a lively instance and example of a victory over death, atchieved by one clothed with mortality like ourselves, "we might have strong consolation and good "hope through grace," and might be fully assured that he who had conquered this enemy for himself, was able also to conquer him for us, and to deliver us from the grave. Therefore the apostle reasons from the fitness and suitableness of this dispensation, as if no other argument could have been so proper to arm us against the fears of death, and to satisfy us that we should not always be held under the power of it; "for as much as the children are partakers "of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took "part of the same, that through death he might "destroy him that had the power of death, and de-"liver them who through fear of death," &c. The force of which argument is this, that seeing men are of a mortal nature (for that he means by "being "partakers of flesh and blood") nothing can be a greater comfort to us against the fears of death, than to see death conquered by flesh and blood, by one of the same nature with ourselves. Therefore the apostle adds, ver. 16. "For verily he took not on "him the nature of angels; but the seed of Abra-"ham." If he had assumed the angelical nature, which is immortal, this would not have been so sensible a conviction to us of the possibility of it, as to have a lively instance and example presented us, of one in our nature conquering death, and triumphing over the grave. I proceed to the

II. thing, What CHRIST hath done towards "the "bringing of life and immortality to light." And because I told you that this is comparatively spoken, and signifies to us a greater degree of evidence, and a firmer assurance given us by the christian religion, than

SERM. CLXXIV.

than the world had before, therefore it will be requiſite to inquire into theſe two things.

Firſt, What aſſurance men had or might have had of the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate, before the coming of CHRIST into the world, and the revelation of the goſpel.

Secondly, What greater evidence, and what higher degree of aſſurance the goſpel now gives us of immortal life; what greater arguments this new revelation and diſcovery of GOD to the world doth furniſh us withal, to perſuade us of this matter, than the world was acquainted withal before.

Firſt, What aſſurance men had or might have had of the immortality of the ſoul, and conſequently of a future ſtate, before the revelation of the goſpel by CHRIST's coming into the world. And here are two things diſtinctly to be conſidered.

Firſt, What arguments natural reaſon doth furniſh us withal, to perſuade us of this principle, that our ſouls are immortal, and that there is another ſtate remains for men after this life.

Secondly, What aſſurance *de facto* the world had of this principle, before CHRIST's coming into the world: what the heathens, and what the Jews had. The reaſon why I ſhall ſpeak to theſe diſtinctly, is, becauſe they are two very different inquiries; what aſſurance men might have had from the principles of natural reaſon concerning this matter, and what aſſurance they had *de facto*. I begin with the

Firſt, What arguments natural reaſon doth furniſh us withal to perſuade us to this principle, that our ſouls are immortal, and conſequently that another ſtate remains for men after this life. And here I ſhall ſhew,

I. How much may be ſaid for it.

II. How

SERM. CLXXIV.

II. How little can be said against it. But before I come to speak particularly to the arguments, which natural reason affords us for the proof of this principle, I shall premise certain general considerations, which may give light and force to the following arguments. As,

First, By the soul we mean a part of man distinct from his body, or a principle in him which is not matter. I chuse rather to describe it this way, than by the essential properties of it, which are hard to fix upon, and are more remote from common apprehension. Our SAVIOUR, when he would convince his disciples after his resurrection, that the body wherein he appeared to them was a real body, and that he was not a spirit or apparition, he bids them "touch and handle him; for, says he, a spirit hath "not flesh and bones, as ye see me to have." So that by the soul or spirit of a man, we mean some principle in man, which is really distinct from his visible and sensible part, from all that in man which affects our outward senses, and which is not to be described by any sensible and external qualities, such as we use to describe a body by: because it is supposed to be of such a nature, as does not fall under the cognizance and notice of any of our senses. And therefore I describe it, by removing from it all those qualities and properties which belong to that which falls under our senses, viz. that it is something in man distinct from his body, a principle in him which is not matter; that principle which is the cause of those several operations, which by inward sense and experience we are conscious to ourselves of; such are perception, understanding, memory, will. So that the most plain and popular notion that we can have of the soul, is, that it is something in us which we never

SERM. CLXXIV.

never ſaw, and which is the cauſe of thoſe effects which we find in ourſelves; it is the principle whereby we are conſcious to ourſelves, that we perceive ſuch and ſuch objects, that we ſee, or hear, or perceive any thing by any other ſenſe; it is that whereby we think and remember, whereby we reaſon about any thing, and do freely chuſe and refuſe ſuch things as are preſented to us. Theſe operations every one is conſcious to himſelf of, and that which is the principle of theſe, or the cauſe from whence theſe proceed, is that which we mean by the ſoul.

Secondly, By the immortality of the ſoul, I mean nothing elſe, but that it ſurvives the body, that when the body dies and falls to the ground, yet this principle which we call the ſoul, ſtill remains and lives ſeparate from it; that is, there is ſtill a part of us which is free from the fate of the body, and continues to perform all thoſe operations, to the performance of which the organs of the body are not neceſſary; that is, when our bodies are deſtitute of life, and become a dead carcaſe, there is ſtill ſomething that did belong to us, which retains the power of underſtanding, which thinks, and reaſons, and remembers, and does all theſe freely.

Thirdly, That he that goes about to prove the ſoul's immortality, ſuppoſeth the exiſtence of a Deity, that there is a GOD. For although there be a very intimate and ſtrict connexion between theſe two principles as to us, as being the two great pillars of all religion; yet that which is firſt and moſt fundamental to all religion, is the exiſtence of a God; which if it be not firſt proved, the beſt arguments for the ſoul's immortality loſe their force. Therefore as to the preſent argument, I ſuppoſe the being of GOD as a thing acknowledged, and not now to be proved; which

which I may the better do, having formerly endeavoured to make good this grand principle of religion, against the pretensions of the Atheists.

Fourthly, The existence of a God being supposed, this doth very much facilitate the other, of the soul's immortality. For this being an essential property of the divine nature, that he is a spirit, that is, something that is not matter; it being once granted that God is, thus much is gained, that there is such a thing as a spirit, as an immaterial substance, that is not liable to die or perish: so that he that goes about to prove the immortality of the soul, shall not need to prove that there may be such a thing as a spirit, that the notion of an immaterial substance does not imply a contradiction, because, supposing that there is a God, who is essentially a spirit, there can be no doubt of the possibility of such a thing as a spirit; and though there be this difference between God and all other spirits, that he is an infinite spirit, whereas others are but finite; yet no man, that grants the existence of an infinite spirit, can with any pretence or colour of reason deny the possibility of a finite spirit.

Fifthly, and lastly, it is highly reasonable that men should acquiesce and rest satisfied in such reasons and arguments for the proof of any thing, as the nature of the thing to be proved will bear; because there are several kinds and degrees of evidence, which all things are not equally capable of. It is sufficient that the evidence be such as the nature of the thing to be proved will admit of, and such as prudent men make no scruple to admit for sufficient evidence for things of the like nature, and such as, supposing the thing to be, we cannot ordinarily expect better or greater evidence for it.

There are two kinds of evidences, which are the

SERM. CLXXIV.

higheſt and moſt ſatisfactory that this world affords to us, and thoſe are the evidence of ſenſe, and mathematical demonſtration. Now there are many things, concerning which the generality of men profeſs themſelves to be well ſatisfied, which do not afford either of theſe kinds of evidence. There's none of us but doth firmly believe that we were born, though we do not remember any ſuch thing; no man's memory does furniſh him with the teſtimony of his ſenſes from this matter, nor can any man prove this by a mathematical demonſtration, nor by any neceſſary argument, ſo as to ſhew it impoſſible that the thing ſhould be otherwiſe. For it is poſſible that a man may come into the world otherwiſe, than by the ordinary courſe of generation, as the firſt man did, who was created immediately by GOD; and yet I know no man in the world who doubts in the leaſt concerning this matter, though he hath no other argument for it, but the teſtimony of others, and his own obſervation, how other perſons like himſelf came into the world. And it is reaſonable to acquieſce in this evidence, becauſe the nature of the thing affords no greater. We who never were at Jeruſalem, do firmly believe that there is ſuch a place, upon the teſtimony and relation of others: and no man is blamed for this, as being over-credulous; becauſe no man, that will not take the pains to go thither, can have any other greater evidence of it, than the general teſtimony of thoſe who ſay they have ſeen it. And indeed almoſt all human affairs, I am ſure the moſt important, are governed and conducted by ſuch evidence, as falls very much ſhort both of the evidence of ſenſe, and of mathematical demonſtration.

To apply this then to my preſent purpoſe. Tha

the soul of man is of an immortal nature, is not capable of all kinds and degrees of evidence. It cannot be proved by our senses, nor is it reasonable to expect it should be so proved; because the soul is supposed, by every one that discourseth of it, to be a thing of such a nature, as cannot be seen or handled, or fall under any other of our senses: nor can it be proved to us by our own experience, while we are in this world; because whoever dies, which is the only trial that can be made whether our souls remain after our bodies, goes out of this world. As for mathematical demonstration, the nature of the thing renders it incapable of it. It remains then that we rest contented with such arguments as the nature of the thing will bear, and with such evidence as men are contented to accept of, and do account sufficient, in other matters; such evidence as a prudent considering man, who is not credulous on the one hand, and on the other is not prejudiced by any interest against it, would rest satisfied in.

Having premised these general considerations, to clear my way, I now come to speak to the particular arguments, whereby the immortality of the soul may be made out to our reason. And the best way to estimate the force of the arguments which I shall bring for it, will be to consider before-hand with ourselves, what evidence we can in reason expect for a thing of this nature. Suppose our souls be immortal; by what kind of arguments could we desire to be assured of it? Setting aside miracles and divine revelation, could we desire more than this?

I. That the thing be a natural notion and dictate of our minds.

II. That it doth not contradict any other principle that nature hath planted in us, but does very

SERM. XXIV. well accord and agree with all other the moſt natural notions of our minds.

III. That it be ſuitable to our natural fears and hopes.

IV. That it tends to the happineſs of man, and the good order and government of the world.

V. That it gives the moſt rational account of all thoſe inward actions, which we are conſcious to ourſelves of, as perception, underſtanding, memory, will, which we cannot without great unreaſonableneſs aſcribe to matter, as the cauſe of them. If all theſe be thus, as I ſhall endeavour to make it appear they are, what greater ſatisfaction could we deſire to have of the immortality of our ſouls, than theſe arguments give us? I do not ſay that any one of theſe arguments doth ſufficiently conclude this thing; nor is it neceſſary, that taken ſingly and by themſelves they ſhould do it; it is ſufficient that they concur to make up one entire argument, which may be a ſufficient evidence of the ſoul's immortality. To illuſtrate this by an inſtance. Suppoſe a man ſhould uſe theſe two arguments, to prove that ſuch a man deſerves to be credited in ſuch a relation. Firſt, becauſe he had ſufficient knowledge of the thing he relates; and, ſecondly, becauſe he is a man of integrity and fidelity. Neither of theſe alone would prove the man to be worthy of credit; though both together make up a good argument. So it is in theſe arguments which I have produced; it may be, no one of them is a ſufficient inducement, taken ſingly and by itſelf, to ſatisfy a man fully that the ſoul is immortal; and yet they may concur together to make a very powerful argument. I begin with the

I. That our ſouls are of an immortal nature, that they do not die and periſh with our bodies, but paſs into another ſtate upon the diſſolution of our bodies,

is

is a natural notion and dictate of our minds. That I call a natural notion, which the minds of all men do naturally hit upon and agree in, notwithstanding the distance and remoteness of the several parts of the world from one another, notwithstanding the different tempers, and manner and ways of education. The only way to measure whether any thing be natural or not, is by inquiring whether it agree to the whole kind or not: if it do, then we call it natural. *Omnium consensus naturæ vox est*, "The consent of "all is the voice of nature," says Tully, speaking of the universal agreement of all nations in this apprehension, that "the souls of men remain after "their bodies." And this he tells us he looks upon as a very great argument, *Maximum verè argumentum est, naturam ipsam de immortalitate animarum tacitam judicare, quod omnibus curæ sint & maximè quidem quæ post mortem futura sunt:* "this is a very "great argument that nature doth secretly, and in "mens silent thoughts determine the immortality of "the soul, that all men are solicitous of what shall "become of them after death." *Nescio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quasi seculorum quoddam augurium futurorum, idque in maximis ingeniis altissimisque animis & existit maxime & apparet facillime:* "I know "not how (saith he) there sticks in the mind a cer-"tain kind of presage of a future state, and this is "most deeply fixed and discovers itself soonest in "the choicest spirits." Again the same author, *Ut Deos esse naturâ opinamur sic permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium:* "As this opinion "is planted in us by nature, that there is a God, so "by the consent of all nations we believe that souls "remain after the body." I might multiply testimonies to this purpose out of the ancient heathen writers;

SERM. CLXXIV.

writers; but these which I have produced out of this great author, are so plain and express, that I need bring no other.

As for those barbarous nations which have been discovered in these latter ages of the world, and which before the first planting of America, were never known to have held correspondence with these parts of the world, yet all those nations agree in this principle, of the immortality of the soul; nay even the most barbarous of those nations, those who are most inhuman and eat one another, those of Joupinamboult in Brasile, who are said by some authors, but I think not upon sufficient grounds, not to acknowledge the being of a GOD; yet even these (as Lerius tells us, who lived among them) had a very fixed and firm persuasion of this principle of religion, the immortality of the soul. "There is "not, says he, any nation in the world more remote "from all religion than these were; yet to shew that "there is some light in the midst of this darkness, "I can, says he, truly affirm, that they have not "only some apprehensions of the immortality of "the soul, but a most confident persuasion of it. "Their opinion, says he, is that the souls of stout "and valiant men after death fly beyond the highest "mountains, and there are gathered to their fathers "and grand-fathers, and live in pleasant gardens, "with all manner of delights; but the souls of "slothful and unactive men, and those who do no-"thing for their country, are carried to Aygman "(so they call the devil) and live with him in perpe-"tual torments." The like Xaverius and others, who laboured in the conversion of the remote parts of the East-Indies, tell us concerning those nations, that they found them generally possessed with this principle, of the soul's immortality. Now

Now what will we call a natural notion, if not that which mankind in all places of the world, in all ages, so far as history informs, did universally agree in? What evidence greater than this can any man give, to shew that any thing is natural? And if we believe a GOD, (which I told you I do all along in this argument suppose to be already proved) can we imagine that this wise and good GOD would plant such a notion and apprehension in the understandings of men, as would put an universal cheat and delusion upon human nature?

And that the universal consent of all nations in this principle, cannot be resolved either into the fears and groundless jealousy and superstition of human nature, nor into universal tradition, which had it's original from some impostor, nor into reason and policy of state, I might shew particularly: but having formerly done that, concerning the universal consent of all nations in the belief of a GOD, and the reason being the very same, as to this principle of the immortality of the soul, I shall not need to do this over again upon this argument.

And that some persons, and particular sects in the world, have disowned this principle, is no sufficient objection against it. It cannot be denied, but the Epicureans among the philosophers, did renounce this principle; and some also among the Stoicks do speak doubtfully of it. The Sadducees likewise among the Jews fell into this error, upon a mistake and misapprehension of the doctrine of their master Sadoc, who, as Josephus tells us, did use to inculcate this principle to his scholars, that though there were no rewards nor punishments after this life, yet men ought to be good and live virtuously; from whence in process of time, by heat of opposition against

SERM. CLXXIV.

againſt the Phariſees, who brought in oral tradition, and made it equal with the written word of GOD, they fell into that error, and denied the ſoul's immortality, not finding ſuch clear texts for it in the Old Teſtament, as to them did ſeem fully convincing of this truth. Xaverius likewiſe tells us, that among the ſeveral ſects of religion which he found in Japan, there was one which denied the immortality of the ſoul, and that there were any ſpirits: but he ſays they were a ſort of notoriouſly wicked and vicious perſons.

To theſe inſtances, which are ſo few, and bear no proportion to the generality of mankind, I have theſe two things to ſay.

1. That no argument can be drawn, *à monſtro ad naturam*. A thing may be natural, and yet ſome inſtances may be brought to the contrary: but theſe are but few in compariſon, and like monſters, which are no argument againſt nature. No man will deny that it is natural for men to have two eyes, and five fingers upon a hand; though there are ſeveral inſtances of men born but with one eye, and with four or ſix fingers.

2. But eſpecially in matters of religion and diſcourſe, which are ſubject to liberty, men may offer violence to nature, and to gratify their luſts and intereſts, may by falſe reaſonings debauch their underſtanding, and by long ſtriving againſt the natural bent and biaſs of it, may alter their apprehenſions of things, and perſuade others to the ſame: but nothing that is againſt nature can prevail very far, but nature will ſtill be endeavouring to recover itſelf, and to free itſelf from the violence which is offered to it. So that mens underſtandings left to themſelves, and not having ſome falſe biaſs put upon them, out of a deſign

design of pride and singularity in opinion, which was the case of Epicurus; or out of the interest of some lust, and a design to set men at liberty to sin, which is the case of most who have renounced this principle; I say, nothing but one of these two can ordinarily make men deny the immortality of the soul. Thus I have done with the first argument, namely, that the immortality of the soul is a natural notion and dictate of our minds.

SERMON CLXXV.

Of the immortality of the soul, as discovered by nature, and by revelation.

---

2 TIM. i. 10.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, *who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel.*

SERM. CLXXV.

The second sermon on this text.

I Proceed to the second argument, that this notion or principle of the immortality of the soul doth not contradict any other principle that nature hath planted in us, but doth very well accord and agree with all those other notions which are most natural. I shall mention two, which seem to be the most natural notions that we have, and the most deeply rooted in our natures; the one is the existence and the perfections of GOD; and the other, the difference of good and evil. Mankind do universally agree in these two principles, that there is a GOD who is es-

SERM. CLXXV.

ſentially good and juſt; and that there is a real difference between good and evil, which is not founded in the opinion and imagination of perſons, or in the cuſtom and uſage of the world, but in the nature of things. Now this principle of the immortality of the ſoul, and future rewards after this life, is ſo far from claſhing with either of theſe principles, that the contrary aſſertion, viz. that our ſouls are mortal, and that there is nothing to be hoped for, or feared beyond this life, would very much contradict thoſe other principles. To ſhew this then particularly,

1. The immortality of the ſoul is very agreeable to the natural notion which we have of GOD, one part whereof is, that he is eſſentially good and juſt.

(1.) For his goodneſs. It is very agreeable to that, to think that GOD would make ſome creatures for as long a duration as they are capable of. The wiſdom of GOD hath choſen to diſplay itſelf, in creating variety of things of different degrees and perfections; things devoid of life and ſenſe; and ſeveral degrees and orders of ſenſitive creatures, of different ſhapes and figures, of different magnitude, ſome vaſtly great, others extremely little, others of a middle ſort between theſe. And himſelf being a pure ſpirit, we have no reaſon to doubt, but he could make creatures of a ſpiritual nature, and ſuch as ſhould have no principle of ſelf-corruption in them. And ſeeing he could make creatures of ſuch perfection, if we believe him to be eſſentially good, we have no reaſon to doubt, but that he hath done ſo. For it is the very nature of goodneſs, to communicate and diffuſe itſelf, and to delight in doing ſo; and we cannot imagine, but that the ſame goodneſs which prompted and inclined him to give being to thoſe creatures which are of an inferior degree of perfection, would

move him likewise to make creatures more perfect, and capable of greater degrees of happiness, and of a longer enjoyment of it, if it were in his power to make such; and no man that believes the omnipotency of GOD can doubt of this. For he who by a pure act of his will can command things to be, and in an instant to start out of nothing, can as easily make one sort of creatures as another. Now the power of GOD being supposed, his goodness secures us of his will: for we cannot imagine any such thing as envy, in a being which we suppose to be perfectly good; nothing being more inconsistent with perfect goodness, than to be unwilling to communicate happiness to others, and to grudge that others should partake of it.

Now this being supposed, that GOD could and would make creatures of a spiritual and immortal nature, and the utmost imaginable perfections of such creatures being knowledge and liberty, wherever these perfections are found, we have reason to conclude that creature to be endowed with a principle that is of a spiritual and immortal nature. Now these perfections of understanding and will being found in man, this argues him to be endowed with such a principle, as is in it's own nature capable of an immortal duration.

It is true indeed, this spiritual part of man, which we call his soul, is united to a visible and material part, viz. his body; the union of which parts constitutes a peculiar sort of creature, which is *utriusque mundi nexus*, "unites the material and immaterial "world, the world of matter and of spirits." And as it is very suitable to the wisdom of GOD, which delights in variety, that there should be a sort of creatures, compounded of both these principles, mat-

SERM. CLXXV.

ter and spirit; so it is very agreeable to his goodness to think that he would design such creatures for as long a duration and continuance as they were capable of. For as it is the effect of goodness to bring creatures forth into the possession of that life and happiness which they are capable of; so to continue them in the enjoyment of it for so long as they are capable.

The sum of all this is, that as it is agreeable to the wisdom of God, which made the world, to display itself in all variety of creatures; so it is agreeable to his goodness, to make some of as perfect a kind as creatures are capable of being. Now it being no repugnancy nor contradiction, that a creature should be of a spiritual and immortal nature, we have no reason to think, but that the fruitfulness of the divine goodness hath brought forth such creatures; and if there be reason to conclude any thing to be of a spiritual and immortal nature, certainly the principle of understanding and liberty, which we are conscious of in ourselves, deserves to be reputed such.

(2.) It is very agreeable to the justice of God, to think the souls of men remain after this life, that there may be a state of reward and recompence in another world. If we believe God to be holy and just, we cannot but believe that he loves righteousness and goodness, and hates iniquity; and that as he is governor and publick magistrate of the world, he is concerned to countenance and encourage the one, and to discountenance and discourage the other. Now the providences of God being in a great measure promiscuously administered in this world, so that no man can make any certain judgment of God's love and hatred towards persons, by what befals them in this world, it being the lot of good men many times to suffer and be afflicted, and of wicked men to live in a flourishing

flourishing and prosperous condition; I say, things being thus, it is very agreeable to these notions which we have of the divine holiness and justice, to believe that there will a time come, when this wise and just governor of the world will make a wide and visible difference between the righteous and the wicked; so that though for a while the justice of God may be clouded, yet there will a time come when it shall be clearly manifested, and every eye see it and bear witness to it, when "judgment shall break forth as "the light, and righteousness as the noon-day." It is possible that sin for a while may go unpunished, nay, triumph and prosper; and that virtue and innocence may not only be unrewarded, but oppressed and despised, and persecuted. And this may be reconcilable enough to the wisdom of God's providence, and the justice of it, supposing the immortality of the soul, and another state after this life, wherein all things shall be set strait, and every man shall receive according to his works: but unless this be supposed, it is impossible to solve the justice of God's providence. Who will believe that the affairs of the world are administered by him who loves righteousness, and hates all the workers of iniquity, who will not let the least service that is done to him pass unrewarded, nor on the other hand acquit the guilty, and let sin go unpunished, which are the properties of justice; I say, who will believe this, that looks into the course of the world, and sees with how little difference and distinction of good and bad, the affairs of it are managed? That sees virtue discountenanced and despised, poor and destitute, afflicted and tormented; when wickedness is many times exalted to high places, and makes a great noise and ruffle in the world? He that considers what a hazard many

SERM. CLXXV.

times

SERM. CLXXV.

times good men run, how for goodneſs ſake they venture, and many times quit all the contentments and enjoyments of this life, and ſubmit to the greateſt ſufferings and calamities that human nature is capable of; while in the mean time proſperity is poured into the lap of the wicked, and heaven ſeems to look pleaſantly upon thoſe that deal treacherouſly, and to be ſilent whilſt the wicked devours the man that is more righteous than himſelf; he that conſiders this, and can without ſuppoſing another life after this, pretend to vindicate the juſtice of theſe things, muſt be as blind as the fortune that governs them. Would not this be a perpetual ſtain and blemiſh upon the divine providence, that Abel, who offered up "a better "ſacrifice than Cain, and had this teſtimony, that "he pleaſed GOD," yet after all this, ſhould have no other reward for it, but to be ſlain by his brother, who had offended GOD by a ſlight and contemptuous offering? If there were no reward to be expected after this life, would not this have been a ſad example to the world, to ſee one of the firſt men that ſerved GOD acceptably, thus rewarded? What a pitiful encouragement would it be to men to be good, to ſee profane Eſau bleſt "with the dew of heaven, and "the fatneſs of the earth;" and to hear good old Jacob in the end and concluſion of his days, to complain, "few and evil have the days of my pilgrimage "been?" If this had been the end of Eſau and Jacob, it would puzzle all the wit and reaſon of mankind, to wipe off this reproach from the providence of GOD, and vindicate the juſtice of it. And therefore I do not wonder, that the greateſt wits among the heathen philoſophers, were ſo much puzzled with this objection againſt the providence of GOD; if the wiſe, and juſt, and good GOD do adminiſter the affairs

fairs of the world, and be concerned in the good or bad actions of men, *cur bonis male & malis bene?* "How comes it to pass, that good men many times "are miserable, and bad men so happy in the "world?" And they had no other way to wipe off this objection, but by referring these things to another world, wherein the temporal sufferings of good men should be eternally rewarded; and the short and transient happiness of wicked men should be rendered insignificant, and drowned in an eternity of misery.

So that if we believe the being of God, and the providence of God; (which I do all along take for granted in this argument) there is no other way imaginable to solve the equity and justice of God's providence, but upon this supposition, that there is another life after this. For to say, that virtue is a sufficient and abundant reward for itself, though it have some truth in it, if we set aside those sufferings and miseries and calamities, which virtue is frequently attended with in this life; yet if these be taken in, it is but a very jejune and dry speculation. For considering the strong propension and inclination of human nature to avoid these evils and inconveniencies, a state of virtue attended with great sufferings, would be so far from being a happiness, that it would be a real misery; so that the determination of the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 19. is according to nature, and the truth and reason of things, that, "if in this life only we "had hope, we were of all men most miserable." For although it be true, that as things now stand, and as the nature of man is framed, good men do find a strange kind of inward pleasure and secret satisfaction of mind in the discharge of their duty, and in doing what is virtuous; yet every man that looks into himself, and consults his own breast, will find that this

SERM. CLXXV.

this delight and contentment ſprings chiefly from the hopes which men conceive, that a holy and virtuous life ſhall not be unrewarded: and without theſe hopes virtue is but a dead and empty name: and notwithſtanding the reaſonableneſs of virtuous actions compared with the contrary of them, yet when virtue came to be encumbered with difficulties, and to be attended with ſuch ſufferings and inconveniencies, as were grievous and intolerable to human nature, then it would appear unreaſonable to chuſe that for a happineſs, which would rob a man of all the felicity of his life. For though a man were never ſo much in love with virtue, for the native beauty and comelineſs of it; yet it would ſtrangely cool his affection to it, to conſider that he ſhould be undone by the match, that when he had it he muſt go a begging with it, and be in danger of death, for the ſake of that which he had choſen for the felicity of his life. So that how devout ſoever the woman might be, yet I dare ſay ſhe was not over-wiſe and conſiderate, who going about with a pitcher of water in one hand, and a pan of coals in the other, and being aſked what ſhe intended to do with them, anſwered: "that ſhe "intended with the one to burn up heaven, and "with the other to quench hell, that men might love "God and virtue for their own ſakes, without hope "of reward, or fear of puniſhment."

And the conſequence of this dry doctrine does ſufficiently appear in the ſect of the Sadducees, which had its riſe from this principle of Sadoc, the maſter of the ſect, who out of an indiſcreet zeal to teach ſomething above others, and indeed above the pitch of human nature, inculcated this doctrine upon his ſcholars, that religion and virtue ought to be loved for themſelves, though there were no reward of virtue

to

SERM. CLXXV.

to be hoped, nor punishment of vice to be feared in another world; from which his disciples inferred, that it was not necessary to religion to believe a future state, and in process of time, peremptorily maintained that there was no life after this. For they did not only deny the resurrection of the body, but as St. Paul tells us, they said, that "there was neither angel nor spirit;" that is, they denied that there was any thing of an immortal nature, that did remain after this life. And what the consequence of this was, we may see in the character which Josephus gives of that sect; for he tells us, that the commonalty of the Jews were of the sect of the Pharisees, but most of the great and rich men were Sadducees; which plainly shews, that this dry speculation of loving religion and virtue for themselves, without any expectation of future rewards, did end in their giving over all serious pursuit of religion: and because they hoped for nothing after this life, therefore laying aside all other considerations, they applied themselves to the present business of this life, and grasped as much of the present enjoyment of its power and riches, as they could by any means attain to.

And for a farther evidence of this, that it is only or principally the hopes of a future happiness that bear men up in the pursuit of virtue, that give them so much comfort and satisfaction in the prosecution of it, and make men encounter the difficulties, and oppositions, and persecutions they meet withal in the ways of religion, with so much undauntedness and courage, I say, for the farther evidence of this, I shall only offer this consideration, that according to the degree of this hope and assurance of another life, mens constancy and courage in the ways of virtue and religion have been. Before CHRIST's coming

SERM. CLXXV.

into the world, and "the bringing of life and immortality to light by the goſpel," we do not find in all ages of the world, ſo many inſtances of patience and conſtant ſuffering for religion, as happened in the firſt age after CHRIST. GOD did not think fit to try the world ſo much in this kind, till they were furniſhed with a principle which would bear them up under the greateſt ſufferings, which was nothing elſe but the full aſſurance which the goſpel gave the world of a bleſſed immortality after this life; the firm belief and perſuaſion of which, made Chriſtians dead to the world, and all the contentments and enjoyments of it, and by raiſing them above all the pleaſures and terrors of ſenſe, made them to deſpiſe preſent things, "in hopes of eternal life, which "GOD that could not lye had promiſed." This was that which ſet them above the fears of death, ſo that they were not to be frighted out of their religion by the moſt exquiſite torments, and all the moſt horrid and fearful ſhapes that the malice of men and devils could dreſs up miſery and affliction in. Whereas under the old diſpenſation of the law, before the revelation of the goſpel, when the promiſes of eternal life were not ſo clear, and mens hopes of it more weak and faint, the expreſs encouragement to obedience was founded in the promiſes of temporal bleſſings; GOD herein complying with the neceſſity of human nature, which is not to be wrought upon to any great purpoſe, but by arguments of advantage.

The ſum of this argument, which I have thus largely dilated upon, becauſe I look upon it as one of the moſt ſtrong and convincing of the ſoul's immortality, is this; that the juſtice of GOD's providence cannot ſufficiently be vindicated, but upon the ſuppoſal of this principle of the ſoul's immortality:

whereas if this principle be admitted, that men pass out of this life into an eternal state of happiness or misery, according as they have behaved themselves in this world; then the account of the unequal providences of GOD in this world is easy. For if we look upon this life as a state of probation, of trial to wicked men, and of exercise to good men in order to a future and eternal state; and if we consider withal, how vast the difference is between time and eternity, it will be easy then to apprehend how all things may be set strait in another world, and how the righteousness of GOD may appear, in giving an abundant recompence to good men for all their temporal service and sufferings, which do but prepare them the more for a quicker relish of the glory and happiness which is reserved for them; and on the other hand, in punishing wicked men, whose short ease and prosperity in this world will, by the just judgment of GOD for their abuse of the blessings of this life, set out their misery and torment to the greatest disadvantage. For as nothing commends happiness more than precedent sorrow; so nothing makes pain and suffering more bitter and intolerable, than to step into them out of a state of ease and pleasure; so that the pleasures and prosperity of wicked men in this life, considered with the punishment of the next, which will follow upon them, is an addition to their misery. This is the very sting of the second death; and in this sense also that of the wise man is true, "the ease of the simple will slay them, "and the prosperity of" these "fools" shall be the great aggravation of their destruction.

2. Another notion which is deeply rooted in the nature of man, is, that there is a difference between good and evil, which is not founded in the imagi-

SERM. CLXXV.

nation of perſons, or in the cuſtom and uſage of the world, but in the nature of things; that there are ſome things which have a natural evil, and turpitude, and deformity in them; for example, impiety and profaneneſs towards GOD, injuſtice and unrighteouſneſs towards men, perfidiouſneſs, injury, ingratitude, theſe are things that are not only condemned by the poſitive laws and conſtitutions of particular nations and governments, but by the general verdict and ſentiments of humanity. Piety and religion towards GOD, juſtice, and righteouſneſs, and fidelity, and reverence of oaths, regard to a man's word and promiſe, and gratitude towards thoſe who have obliged us, theſe and the like qualities, which we call virtues, are not only well ſpoken of, where they are countenanced by the authority of law, but have the tacit approbation and veneration of mankind: And any man that thinks theſe things are not naturally and in themſelves good, but are meerly arbitrary, and depend upon the pleaſure of authority, and the will of thoſe who have the power of impoſing laws upon others; I ſay, any ſuch perſon may eaſily be convinced of his error, by putting this ſuppoſition; ſuppoſe wickedneſs were eſtabliſhed by a law, and the practice of fraud, and rapine, and perjury, falſeneſs in a man's word and promiſes, were commended and rewarded, and it were made a crime for any man to be honeſt, to have any regard to his oath or promiſe, and the man that ſhould dare to be honeſt or make good his word ſhould be ſeverely puniſhed and made a publick example; I ſay, ſuppoſe the reverſe of all that which we now call virtue, were ſolemnly enacted by a law, and publick authority ſhould enjoin the practice of that which we call vice; what would the conſequence of this be, when

the

the tables were thus turned? Would that which we now call vice, gain the esteem and reputation of virtue; and those things which we now call virtue, grow contemptible and become odious to human nature? If not, then there is a natural and intrinsical difference between good and evil, between virtue and vice; there is something in the nature of these things which does not depend upon arbitrary constitution. And I think nothing can be more evident, than that the authority which should attempt such an establishment, would thereby be render'd ridiculous, and all laws of such a tendency as this, would be hist out of the world. And the reason of this is plain, because no government could subsist upon these terms: for the very forbidding men to be just and honest, the enjoining of fraud, and violence, and perjury, and breach of trust, would apparently destroy the end of government, which is to preserve men and their rights against the encroachments and inconveniencies of these; and this end being destroyed, human society would presently disband, and men would naturally fall into a state of war; which plainly shews that there is a natural, and immutable, and eternal reason for that which we call goodness and virtue, and against that which we call vice and wickedness.

To come then to my purpose, it is very agreeable to this natural notion of the difference between good and evil, to believe the soul's immortality. For nothing is more reasonable to imagine, than that good and evil, as they are differenced in their nature, so they shall be in their rewards; that it shall one time or other be well to them that do well, and evil to the wicked man. Now seeing this difference is not made in this world, but all things happen alike to all,

SERM. CLXXV.

all, the belief of this difference between good and evil, and the different rewards belonging to them, infers another ſtate after this life, which is the very thing we mean by the ſoul's immortality, namely, that it does not die with the body, but remains after it, and paſſeth into a ſtate wherein it ſhall receive a reward ſuitable to the actions of this life.

And thus I have done with the ſecond argument for the ſoul's immortality, namely, that this principle doth not contradict thoſe other principles which nature hath planted in us, but doth very well accord and agree with thoſe natural notions which we have of the goodneſs of GOD, and of the juſtice of his providence, and of the real and intrinſical difference between good and evil.

III. This principle of the ſoul's immortality, is ſuitable to the natural hopes and fears of men.

To the natural hopes of men. Whence is it that men are ſo deſirous to purchaſe a laſting fame, and to perpetuate their memory to poſterity, but that they hope that there's ſomething belonging to them, which ſhall ſurvive the fate of the body, and when that lies in the ſilent grave, ſhall be ſenſible of the honour which is done to their memory, and ſhall enjoy the pleaſure of the juſt and impartial fame, which ſhall ſpeak of them to poſterity without envy or flattery? And this is a thing incident to the greateſt and moſt generous ſpirits; none ſo apt as they to feed themſelves with theſe hopes of immortality. What was it made thoſe great ſpirits among the Romans, ſo freely to ſacrifice their lives for the ſafety of their country, but an ambition that their names might live after them, and be mentioned with honour when they were dead and gone? Which ambition of theirs, had it not been grounded in the hopes of

immor-

immortality, and a natural opinion of another life after this, in which they might enjoy the delight and satisfaction of the fame which they had purchased, nothing could have been more vain and unreasonable. If there were no hopes of a life beyond this, what is there in fame that should tempt any man to forego this present life, with all the contentments and enjoyments of it? What is the pleasure of being well spoken of, when a man is not? What is the happiness which men can promise to themselves, when they are out of being, when they can enjoy nothing, nor be sensible of any thing, because they are not? So that the spring of all those brave and gallant actions, which the heathens did with the hazard of their lives, out of a desire of after-fame and glory; I say, the spring of all those actions, could be no other than the hopes of another life after this, in which they made account to enjoy the pleasure of the fame, which they purchased with the expence and loss of this present life.

But this ardent desire and impatient thirst after fame, concerns but a few of mankind in comparison. I shall therefore instance in something which is more common and general to mankind, which plainly argues this hope of immortality. What is the ground of that peace, and quiet, and satisfaction, which good men find in good and virtuous actions, but that they have a secret persuasion and comfortable hopes that they shall some time or other be rewarded? And we find that they maintain these even when they despair of any reward in this world. Now what do these hopes argue, but a secret belief of a future state, and another life after this, wherein men shall receive the reward of their actions, and inherit the fruit of their doings? Whence is it else, that good men,

SERM. CLXXV.

men, though they find that goodneſs ſuffers, and is perſecuted in this world, and that the beſt deſigns are many times unſucceſsful; what is it that bears them up under theſe diſappointments, and makes them conſtant in a virtuous courſe, but this hope of another life, in a better ſtate of things hereafter? They have ſome ſecret preſage in their own minds of a life after death, which will be a time of recompence, as this is of trial.

2. The ſame may be argued from the natural fears of men. Whence is the ſecret ſhame, and fear, and horror, which ſeizeth upon the minds of men, when they are about a wicked action; yea, though no eye ſee them, and though what they are doing do not fall under the cognizance of any human court or tribunal? Whence is it that they meet with ſuch checks and rebukes in their own ſpirits, and feel ſuch a diſturbance and confuſion in their minds, when they do a vile and unworthy thing; yea, although it be ſo ſecretly contrived and ſo privately managed, that no man can charge them with it, or call them to account for it? What art thou afraid of, man, if there be no life after this? Why do thy joints tremble, and thy knees knock together, if thou be'ſt in no danger from any thing in this world, and haſt no fears of the other? If men had not a natural dread of another world, and ſad and dreadful preſages of future vengeance, why do not men ſin with aſſurance, when no eye ſees them? Why are not men ſecure, when they have only imagined a miſchief privately in their own hearts, and no creature is privy and conſcious to it? Why do mens own conſciences laſh and ſting them for theſe things, which they might do with as great impunity from men in this world, as the moſt virtuous actions? Whence is it

that

that *cogitare, peccare est*, as *Min. Felix* expresseth it, *& non solum conscios timet, sed & conscientiam?* "Whence is it that a wicked man is guilty upon "account merely of his thoughts, and is not only "fearful because of those things which others are "conscious of, but because of those things which "no body knows but his own conscience?" Whence is it, that,

Scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum,
Facti crimen habet,

That "he that does but imagine and devise secret "mischief in his heart is guilty to himself, as if the "fact had been committed;" and when no man can charge and accuse him for it, yet,

Nocte dieque suum gestat in pectore testem,

"he carries his accuser in his breast, who does night "and day incessantly witness against him?"

And that these fears are natural, the sudden rise of them is a good evidence. They do not proceed from deliberation, men do not reason themselves into these fears, but they spring up in mens minds they know not how; which shews that they are natural. Now a man's natural actions, I mean such as surprize us, and do not proceed from deliberation, are better arguments of the intimate sense of our minds, and do more truly discover the bottom of our hearts, and those notions that are implanted in our natures, than those actions which are governed by reason and discourse, and proceed from deliberation. To demonstrate this by an instance; If a man upon a sudden sight of a snake, do recoil and start back, tremble and grow pale; this is a better argument of a natural antipathy and fear, than it is of a natural cou-

SERM. CLXXV.

rage, if afterward, when he hath commanded down his fear, he ſhould by his reaſon perſuade himſelf to take up the ſnake into his hand. If you would know what a man's natural apprehenſions are, take him on the ſudden, and give him no time to deliberate. Therefore ſome cunning politicians have uſed this way of ſurprize and ſudden queſtions, to dive into the hearts of men, and diſcover their ſecrets.

In like manner, if we would know what mens natural apprehenſions are concerning the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate, obſerve what mens firſt thoughts are, whether a man's conſcience does not ſuggeſt to him ſuch fears upon the commiſſion of ſin. There's no doubt but men may offer violence to their natures, and reaſon themſelves into great doubts about the ſoul's immortality; nay, men may be bribed into the contrary opinion: but this man who in his deliberate diſcourſes denies any rewards after this life, ſhall by his natural actions acknowledge them, by thoſe fears and terrors, which his guilty conſcience is ever and anon ſurprized withal.

The ſum of this argument is, that it is natural for men that live piouſly and virtuouſly, that do juſt and honeſt and worthy actions, to conceive good hopes that it ſhall ſome time or other be well with them; that however they may meet with no reward and recompence in this world, yet verily there will be a reward for the righteous: and on the other hand, wicked men, though they flouriſh and proſper in their wickedneſs, yet they are not free from guilt, they are fearful and timorous, even when their condition ſets them above the fear of any man upon earth. Now what doth this ſignify, but that they have ſome ſecret preſages of an after-puniſhment? Nature ſuggeſts this thought to them, that there will be

be a time when all the sins which they have committed, and the wickedness which they have done, shall be accounted for.

And it is no prejudice to this truth, that some men sin against their consciences, and by frequent acts of sin, and offering notorious violence to their own light, bring themselves into a brawny and insensible condition, so that they have not those stings and lashes, are not haunted with those fears and terrors which pursue common sinners. This is but reasonable to be expected, that men by frequent acts of sin, should lose the tender sense which mens consciences naturally have of good and evil; that men that lay waste their consciences by gross and notorious sins, should lose the sense of good and evil, and that their consciences should grow hard like the beaten road; nay, it is suitable to the justice of GOD, to give up such persons to a reprobate sense, to an injudicious mind, that they who would not be awakened and reclaimed by the natural fear of divine justice, which GOD hath hid in every man's conscience, should at last lose all sense and apprehension of these things, and be permitted securely and without remorse to perfect their own ruin.

IV. This doctrine of the immortality of the soul, does evidently tend to the happiness and perfection of man, and to the good order and government of the world; to the happiness and perfection of man, both considered singly, and in society.

1. To the happiness and perfection of man considered in his single capacity. If it be a thing desirable to be at all, then it is a thing desirable to be continued in being as long as may be, and for ever if it be possible. If life be a perfection, then eternal life is much more so; especially if the circum-

SERM. CLXXV.

ſtances of this preſent life be conſidered, together with the ſtate which we hope for hereafter. The condition of men in this preſent life, is attended with ſo many frailties, liable to ſo great miſeries and ſufferings, to ſo many pains and diſeaſes, to ſuch various cauſes of ſorrow and trouble, of fear and vexation, by reaſon of the many hazards and uncertainties, which not only the comforts and contentments of our lives, but even life itſelf is liable to, that the pleaſure and happineſs of it is by theſe very much rebated; ſo that were not men trained on with the hopes of ſomething better hereafter, life itſelf would to many men be an inſupportable burden; if men were not ſupported and born up under the anxieties of this preſent life, with the hopes and expectations of a happier ſtate in another world, mankind would be the moſt imperfect and unhappy part of GOD's creation. For although other creatures be ſubjected to a great deal of vanity and miſery, yet they have this happineſs, that as they are made for a ſhort duration and continuance, ſo they are only affected with the preſent, they do not fret and diſcontent themſelves about the future, they are not liable to be cheated with hopes, nor tormented with fears, nor vexed at diſappointments, as the ſons of men are.

But if our ſouls be immortal, this makes abundant amends and compenſation for the frailties of this life, and all the tranſitory ſufferings and inconveniencies of this preſent ſtate; human nature, conſidered with this advantage, is infinitely above the brute beaſts that periſh.

As for thoſe torments and miſeries which we are liable to in another world, far greater than any thing that men ſuffer in this life, this ought not in reaſon to be objected againſt the immortality of the ſoul, as

if

if this doctrine did not tend to the happiness and perfection of man: for if this be truly the case of mankind, that GOD hath made mens souls of an immortal nature, and designed them for a perpetual duration and continuance in another state after this life, in order to which state, he hath placed every man in this world, to be as it were a candidate for eternity, he hath furnished every man with such helps and advantages, such opportunities and means for the attaining of everlasting happiness, that if he be not grosly wanting to himself, he shall not miscarry; if this be the case, then an immortal nature is a real and mighty privilege. If GOD puts every man into a capacity of happiness, and if no man becomes miserable but by his own choice, if no man falls short of eternal happiness but by his own fault, then immortality is a privilege in itself, and a curse to none but those who make it so to themselves.

2. This doctrine tends to the happiness of man considered in society, to the good order and government of the world. I do not deny, but if this principle of the immortality of the soul were not believed in the world, if the generality of mankind had no regard to any thing beyond this present life; I say, I do not deny notwithstanding this, but there would be some kind of government kept up in the world; the necessities of human nature, and the mischiefs of contention would compel men to some kind of order: but I say withal, that if this principle were banished out of the world, government would want it's most firm basis and foundation; there would be infinitely more disorders in the world, were men not restrained from injustice and violence by principles of conscience, and the awe of another world. And that this is so, is evident from hence,

SERM. CLXXV.

that all magistrates think themselves concerned to cherish religion, and to maintain in the minds of men the belief of a GOD, and of a future state.

This is the fourth argument, that this doctrine does evidently tend to the happiness of man, and the good order and government of the world. I grant, that this argument alone, and taken singly by itself, is far from enforcing and necessarily concluding the soul's immortality: but if the other arguments be of force to conclude, this added to them is a very proper inducement to persuade and incline men to the belief of this principle; it does very well serve the purpose for which I bring it, namely, to shew that if there be good arguments for it, no man hath reason to be averse or backward to the belief of it; if by other arguments we be convinced of the suitableness of this principle to reason, this consideration will satisfy us, that it is not against our interest to entertain it. And no man that is not resolved to live wickedly, hath reason to desire that the contrary should be true. For what would a man gain by it, if the soul were not immortal, but to level himself with the beasts that perish, and to put himself into a worse and more miserable condition than any of the creatures below him?

SERMON CLXXVI.

Of the immortality of the soul, as discovered by nature, and by revelation.

2 TIM. i. 10.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, *who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel.*

SERM. CLXXVI. The third sermon on this text.

THE fifth and last argument is, that this supposition of the soul's immortality gives the fairest account and easiest solution of the phænomena of human nature, of those several actions and operations which we are conscious to ourselves of, and which, without great violence to our reason, cannot be resolved into a bodily principle, and ascribed to meer matter; such are perception, memory, liberty, and the several acts of understanding and reason. These operations we find in ourselves, and we cannot imagine how they should be performed by mere matter; therefore we ought in all reason to resolve them into some principle of another nature from matter, that is, into something that is immaterial, and consequently immortal, that is, incapable in it's own nature of corruption and dissolution.

And that the force of this argument may the better appear, I shall speak something of these distinctly, and shew that none of these operations can be performed from mere matter. I begin with the

1. And lowest, which is sensitive perception, which is nothing else but a consciousness to ourselves of

SERM. CLXXVI.

of our own ſenſations, an apprehenſion of the impreſſions which are made upon us; and this faculty is that which conſtitutes the difference between ſenſitive and inſenſitive creatures. A ſtone may have ſeveral impreſſions made upon it, as well as the living creature endowed with ſenſe: but with this difference, that whatever impreſſions are made upon a ſtone, by knocking, cutting, or any other kind of motion or action, the ſtone is ſtupid, and is not in the leaſt conſcious of any of thoſe impreſſions, does not perceive what is done to it; whereas thoſe creatures which are endowed with ſenſe, do plainly perceive their own and other motions, they are affected with the impreſſions which are made upon them.

Now we can give no account of this operation from mere matter. It is plain, that matter is not in its own nature ſenſible: for we find the greateſt part of the world to conſiſt of inſenſible parts, and ſuch as have no perception. Now if matter be granted in itſelf to be inſenſible, it is utterly unimaginable, how any motion or configuration of the parts of it, ſhould raiſe that which hath no ſenſe to a faculty of perception. Epicurus fancied thoſe particles of matter, of which ſouls were framed, to be the fineſt and ſmalleſt; and for their ſmoother and eaſier motion, that they were all of a round figure. But ſuppoſing matter not to be naturally and of itſelf ſenſible, who can conceive what that is which ſhould awaken the drowſy parts of it, to a lively ſenſe of the impreſſions made upon it? It is every whit as eaſy to imagine how an inſtrument might be framed and tuned ſo artificially, as to hear its own ſounds, and to be marvelouſly delighted with them; or that a glaſs might be poliſhed to that fineneſs, as to ſee all thoſe objects which are reflected upon it.

But

But there is one difficulty in this: for it may be said, if sensitive perception be an argument of the soul's immateriality, and consequently immortality, then the souls of beasts will be immortal, as well as the souls of men. For answer to this, I shall say these things.

(1.) That the most general and common philosophy of the world hath always acknowledged something in beasts besides their bodies, and that the faculty of sense and perception, which is in them, is founded in a principle of a higher nature than matter. And as this was always the common philosophy of the world, so we find it to be a supposition of scripture, which frequently attributes souls to beasts as well as to men, though of a much inferior nature. And therefore those particular philosophers, who have denied any immaterial principle, or a soul to beasts, have also denied them to have sense, any more than a clock or watch, or any other engine; and have imagined them to be nothing else but a finer and more complicated kind of engines, which, by reason of the curiosity and tenderness of their frame, are more easily susceptible of all kind of motions and impressions from without, which impressions are the cause of all those actions, that resemble those sensations which we men find in ourselves; which is to say, that birds, and beasts, and fishes, are nothing else but a more curious sort of puppets, which by certain secret and hidden weights and springs do move up and down, and counterfeit the actions of life and sense. This I confess seems to me to be an odd kind of philosophy; and it hath this vehement prejudice against it, that if this were true, every man would have great cause to question the reality of his own perceptions: for to all appearance the sensations of beasts are as real as ours, and in many things their

SERM. LXXVI.

ſenſes much more exquiſite than ours; and if nothing can be a ſufficient argument to a man, that he is really endowed with ſenſe, beſides his own conſciouſneſs of it, then every man hath reaſon to doubt whether all men in the world beſides himſelf be not mere engines; for no man hath any other evidence, that another man is really endowed with ſenſe, than he hath that brute creatures are ſo; for they appear to us to ſee, and hear, and feel, and ſmell, and taſte things as truly and as exactly as any man in the world does.

(2.) Suppoſing beaſts to have an immaterial principle diſtinct from their body, it will not from hence follow, that they are immortal, in the ſenſe that we attribute immortality to men. For immortality, when we aſcribe it to men, ſignifies two things.

1. That the ſoul remains after the body, and is not corrupted and diſſolved together with it.

2. That it lives in this ſeparate ſtate, and is ſenſible of happineſs or miſery.

1. Immortality imports that the ſoul remains after the body, and is not corrupted or diſſolved together with it. And there is no inconvenience in attributing this ſort of immortality to the brute creatures. And here it is not neceſſary for us, who know ſo little of the ways and works of GOD, and of the ſecrets of nature, to be able to give a particular account what becomes of the ſouls of brute creatures after death; whether they return into the ſoul and ſpirit of the world, if there be any ſuch thing, as ſome fancy; or whether they paſs into the bodies of other animals which ſucceed in their rooms; I ſay, this is not neceſſary to be particularly determined; it is ſufficient to lay down this in general as highly probable, that they are ſuch a ſort of ſpirits, which, as to their operation and life, do neceſſarily depend upon matter,

matter, and require union with it, which union being dissolved, they lapse into an insensible condition, and a state of inactivity. For being endowed only with a sensitive principle, the operations of which do plainly depend upon an organical disposition of the body, when the body is dissolved, all their activity ceaseth; and when this visible frame of the world shall be dissolved, and this scene of sensible things shall pass away, then it is not improbable that they shall be discharged out of being, and return to their first nothing: for though in their own nature they would continue longer, yet having served the end of their being, and done their work, it is not unsuitable to the same wisdom that made them, and commanded them into being, to let them sink into their first state.

2dly, Immortality, as applied to the spirits of men, imports that their souls are not only capable of continuing, but living in this separate state, so as to be sensible of happiness and misery. For the soul of man being of an higher nature, and not only endowed with a faculty of sense, but likewise other faculties which have no necessary dependance upon, or connexion with matter; having a sense of GOD, and of divine and spiritual things, and being capable of happiness in the enjoyment of GOD, or of misery in a separation from him; it is but reasonable to imagine, that the souls of men shall be admitted to the exercise of these faculties, and the enjoyment of that life which they are capable of in a separate state. And this is that which constitutes that vast and wide difference between the souls of men and beasts: and this degree of immortality is as much above the other, as reason and religion are above sense.

2. Another faculty in us, which argues an immaterial, and consequently an immortal principle in

man, is memory; and this likewise is common in some degree to several of the brute creatures, and it seems to be nothing else but a kind of continued sensation of things. And of this we can give no account from mere matter. For if that which we call the soul, were nothing else but, as Epicurus imagined, a little wild-fire, a company of small round particles of matter in perpetual motion, it being a fluid thing, it would be liable to a continual dissipation of its parts, and the new parts that come would be altogether strangers to the impressions made upon the old; so that supposing the soul liable but to those changes which the grosser parts of our bodies, our flesh and blood, continually are liable to, by the evaporation and spending of the old, and an accession of new matter; (and if we suppose the soul to be fluid matter, that is, consisting of particles, which are by no kind of connexion linked to one another, it will in all probability be more easily dissipable, than the grosser parts of the body, and) if so, how is it imaginable that these new and foreign particles should retain any sense of the impressions made upon those which are gone many years ago?

3. Another faculty which I shall instance in, is the will of man, which is endowed with liberty and freedom, and gives a man dominion over his own actions. Matter moves by necessary and certain laws, and cannot move if it be at rest, unless it be moved by another; and cannot rest, that is, cannot but move, if it be impelled by another. Whence then are voluntary motions? Whence is the αὐτεξούσιον, the arbitrary principle which we find in ourselves, the freedom of action to do or not to do, to do this or that, which we are intimately conscious to ourselves of? Of all the operations of our minds, it is the hardest to give an account

account of liberty from mere matter. This Epicurus was sensible of, and infinitely puzzled with it, as we may see by the question which Lucretius puts, SERM. CLXXVI.

Unde est hæc inquam fatis avulsa voluntas?

"How comes the soul of man to have this peculiar privilege of freedom and liberty, above all "other sorts of matter that are in the world? whence "is it, that when all things else move by a fatal ne-"cessity, the soul of man should be exempted from "that slavery?" He does indeed attempt to give an account of it from a motion of declination which is proper and peculiar to the particles of the soul: but that is a more unintelligible riddle than liberty itself. The

4. And last operation I shall instance in, is that of reason and understanding. Not to mention the activity and nimbleness of our thoughts, in the abstracted notions of our minds, the multitude of distinct ideas and notions which dwell together in our souls, none of which are accountable from matter, I shall only instance in two particulars.

(1.) Those acts of reason and judgment whereby we over-rule the reports of our senses, and correct the errors and deceptions of them.

(2.) The contemplation of spiritual and divine things.

(1.) Those acts of reason and judgment whereby we over-rule the reports and determinations of sense. Our sense tells us, that things at a distance are less, than our reason tells us they are really in themselves; as that the body of the sun is but about a foot diameter: but our reason informs us otherwise. Now what is the principle that controls our senses, and corrects the deception of them? If the soul of man be

mere

SERM. CLXVI.

mere matter, it can only judge of things according to the impreſſions which are made upon our ſenſes: but we do judge otherwiſe, and ſee reaſon to do ſo many times. Therefore it muſt be ſome higher principle which judges of things, not by the material impreſſions which they make upon our ſenſes, but by other meaſures. And therefore to avoid this inconvenience, Epicurus was glad, to fly the abſurdity, to affirm that all things really are what they appear to us, and that in truth the ſun is no bigger than it ſeems to be.

(2.) The contemplation of things ſpiritual and divine, is an argument that the ſoul is of a higher original than any thing that is material. To contemplate the nature of GOD, and the divine excellencies and perfections; the meditation of a future ſtate, and of the happineſs of another world; thoſe breathings which good men feel in their ſouls after GOD, and the enjoyment of him, argue the ſpiritual nature of the ſoul. *Hoc habet argumentum divinitatis ſuæ* (ſaith Seneca) *quòd eam divina delectant, nec ut alienis intereſt ſed ut ſuis.* "The ſoul of man hath this argu-
"ment of it's divine original, that it is ſo ſtrangely de-
"lighted, ſo infinitely pleaſed and ſatisfied with the
"contemplation of divine things, and is taken up
"with theſe thoughts, as if they were it's proper
"buſineſs and concernment." Thoſe ſtrong inclinations and deſires after immortality, and the pleaſure which good men find in the fore-thoughts of the happineſs which they hope to enter into, when their ſouls ſhall quit theſe manſions; the reſtleſs aſpirings of our ſouls toward GOD, and thoſe bleſſed manſions where he dwells, and where the ſpirits of good men converſe with him and one another, theſe ſignify our ſouls to be of a nobler extraction than the earth,

that

SERM. CLXXVI.

that they are descended from above, and that heaven is their country, their thoughts are so much upon it, and they are so desirous to return to it.

I shall conclude this argument from the noble and excellent operations of our souls, of which we are conscious to ourselves, with a passage of Tully to this purpose. *Animarum nulla in terris origo inveniri potest: nihil enim est in animis mixtum atque concretum, aut quod ex terrâ natum atque fictum esse videatur.* "The souls of men have not their original "from the earth, it is in vain to seek for it there: "for there is nothing in the mind of man of a ma- "terial mixture and composition, which we can ima- "gine to be born or formed out of the earth. For, "says he, among material and earthly things there "is nothing," *quod vim memoriæ, mentis, cogitationis habeat, quod & præterita teneat, & futura provideat, & complecti possit præsentia.* "There is no "earthly thing which hath the power of memory, "of understanding, of thought, which retains things "past, foresees and provides for things future, com- "prehends and considers things present." *Singularis est igitur quædam natura atque vis animi, sejuncta ab his usitatis notisque naturis*; "so that the nature "and power of the soul are of a peculiar and singu- "lar kind, different from all those natures which "we are acquainted with in this world." He concludes, *Itaque quicquid est quod sentit, quod sapit, quod vult, quod viget, cœleste & divinum est, ob eamque rem æternum sit necesse est.* "Therefore what- "ever that is which is endowed with a power of "perception, with wisdom, with liberty, with so "much vigour and activity as the soul of man, is of "heavenly and divine original, and for that reason "is necessarily immortal, and to continue for ever."

SERM. CLXXVI.

Thus I have represented to you, as briefly and plainly as I could, those which I account the chief and strongest arguments of this great principle of religion, the soul's immortality. Some of them are plain and obvious to every capacity; the rest, though they be above common capacities, yet were not to be neglected, because they may be useful to some, though not to all; and as those who are more wise and knowing should have patience, whilst the most common and plainest things are spoken for the instruction of ordinary capacities, so those of lower capacities should be content that many things should be spoken which may be useful to others, though they be above their reach.

To sum up then what has been said from reason, for the proof of the soul's immortality. It is a natural dictate and notion of our minds, universally entertained in all ages and places of the world, excepting some very few persons and sects; it doth not contradict any other principle that nature hath planted in us, but doth very well agree with those other notions which are most natural; it is most suitable to the natural hopes and fears of men; it evidently tends to the happiness and perfection of man, and to the good order and government of the world; lastly, it gives the fairest account of the phænomena of human nature, of those several actions and operations which we are conscious to ourselves of.

Now supposing the soul were immortal, what greater rational evidence than this can we expect for it? How can we without a revelation have more assurance of the things of this nature, than these arguments give us, not taken singly, but as they concur together to make up an entire argument, and to give us sufficient evidence of this?

I do

SERM. CLXXVI.

I do not say that these arguments do so necessarily conclude it, that there is an absolute impossibility the thing should be otherwise: but so as to render it sufficiently certain to a prudent and considerate man, and one that is willing to accept of reasonable evidence. For the generality of the papists do pertinaciously maintain this unreasonable principle, that there can be no certainty of any thing without infallibility: yet some of the wiser of them have thought better of it, and are pleased to state the business of certainty otherwise; particularly Melchior Canus, one of the most learned of their writers determines those things to be sufficiently certain, which no man can without imprudence and obstinacy disbelieve. *Certa apud homines ea sunt quæ negari sine pervicaciâ & stultitiâ non possunt.* "Men esteem those things "certain, which no man that is not unreasonably "obstinate and imprudent can deny." And I think the arguments I have brought for the soul's immortality, are such as no man that is unprejudiced and hath a prudent regard to his own interest can resist.

Thus I have done with the first thing I propounded to do for the proof of the soul's immortality, which was to shew what evidence of reason there is for it. I shall speak briefly to the

Second thing I propounded, which was to shew how little can be said against it, because this will indirectly give a strength and force to the arguments I have brought for it. For it is very considerable in any question or controversy, what strength there is in the arguments on both sides: for though very plausible arguments may be brought for a thing, yet if others as plausible and specious may be urged against it, this leaves the thing in æquilibrio, it sets the balance even, and inclines the judgment neither way; nay,

SERM. CLXXVI.

nay, if the objections againſt a thing be conſiderable, though not ſo ſtrong as the arguments for it, the conſiderableneſs of the objections does ſo far weaken the contrary arguments: but where the arguments on one hand are ſtrong, and the objections on the contrary very ſlight, and ſuch as may eaſily be anſwered, the weakneſs of the objections contributes to the ſtrength of the argument for the other ſide of the queſtion.

To come then to the buſineſs, I know but three objections, which have any colour againſt this principle.

I. That the notion of a ſpirit, or an immaterial ſubſtance, does imply a contradiction.

Anſw. 1. This is only boldly ſaid, and not the leaſt colour of proof offered for it by the author that aſſerts it. This objection had indeed been conſiderable, if it had been made out as clearly, as it is confidently affirmed. In the mean time I think we may take leave to deny, that the notion of a ſpirit hath any repugnancy in it, till ſome body think fit to prove it.

2. I told you that this queſtion about the ſoul's immortality, ſuppoſeth the exiſtence of GOD to be already proved; and if there be a GOD, and it be an eſſential property of the divine nature, that he is a ſpirit, then there is ſuch a thing as a ſpirit and immaterial ſubſtance, and conſequently the notion of a ſpirit hath no contradiction in it; for if it had, there could be no ſuch thing.

II. It is ſaid, there is no expreſs text for the ſoul's immortality in the old teſtament.

Anſw. This doth not properly belong to the intrinſical arguments and reaſon of the thing, but is matter of revelation. And this I ſhall fully ſpeak to, when I come to ſhew what evidence the Jews had for

SERM. CLXXVI.

for the soul's immortality. In the mean time this may be a sufficient answer to this objection, that there is no absolute necessity why it should be expresly revealed in the old testament, if it be, as I have shewn, a natural notion of our minds: for the scripture supposeth us to be men, and to have an antecedent notion of those truths which are implanted in our nature, and therefore chiefly designs to teach us the way to that eternal happiness which we have a natural notion and hope of. The

III. Objection is from the near and intimate sympathy which is between the soul and the body, which appears in the vigour and strength of our faculties; as understanding and memory do very much depend upon the temper and disposition of the body, and do usually decay and decline with it.

Answ. The utmost that this objection signifies, is, that there is an intimate union and conjunction between the soul and the body, which is the cause of the sympathy which we find to be between them: but it does by no means prove, that they are one and the same essence. Now that there is such an intimate union and connexion between the soul and matter in all creatures endowed with life and sense, is acknowledged by all who affirm the immateriality of souls; though the manner of this union be altogether unknown to us; and supposing such an union, it is but reasonable to imagine that there should be such a sympathy, that the body should be affected with the delights and disturbances of the mind, and that the soul should also take part in the pleasures and pains of the body, that by this means it may be effectually excited and stirred up to provide for the supply of our bodily wants and necessities: and from this sympathy, it is easy to give account how it comes to

pass, that our faculties of understanding, and memory, and imagination, are more or less vigorous, according to the good or bad temper and disposition of our bodies. For by the same reason that the mind may be grieved and afflicted at the pains and sufferings of the body, it may likewise be disordered and weakened in it's operations by the distempers of the body. So that this objection only proves the soul to be united to the body; but not to be the same thing with it.

SERMON CLXXVII.

Of the immortality of the soul, as discovered by nature, and by revelation.

---

2 TIM. i. 10.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, *who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel.*

SERM. CLXXVII.

The fourth sermon on this text.

HAVING in my three former discourses shewed, what arguments natural reason doth furnish us with, for the immortality of our souls, I come now to the second thing I propounded, which is to shew what assurance the world had *de facto*, of this great principle of religion, the soul's immortality, before the revelation of the gospel.

Before our SAVIOUR's coming into the world, there were but two different religions; that of the heathens, and that of the Jews. The religion of the heathens

heathens was natural religion, corrupted and degenerated into idolatry: the religion of the Jews was revealed and instituted by GOD; but did suppose natural religion, and was superadded to it. Therefore I shall consider the heathens and the Jews distinctly. And,

First, Shew what assurance the heathens had of this principle of the soul's immortality.

Secondly, What the Jews had of it.

First, What assurance the heathens had of the soul's immortality.

1. It is evident, that there was a general inclination in mankind, even after it's greatest corruption and degeneracy, to the belief of this principle; which appears in that all people and nations of the world, after they were sunk into the greatest degeneracy, and all (except only the Jews) became idolaters, did universally agree in this apprehension, that their souls did remain after their bodies, and pass into a state of happiness or misery, according as they had demeaned themselves in this life. Not that they did generally reason themselves into this apprehension, by any convincing arguments, but did herein follow the bent and tendency of their natures, which did incline them thus to think. For no other reason can be given of the universal consent, even of the most rude and barbarous nations in this principle, besides the inclination of human nature to this opinion; that is, either men come into the world with this notion imprinted upon their minds, or else (which comes all to one) the understanding of man is naturally of such a frame and make, that left to itself, and the free exercise of it's own thoughts, it will fall into this apprehension.

2. The unlearned and common people among the

SERM. CLXXVII.

the heathen, ſeem to have had the trueſt and leaſt wavering apprehenſions in this matter; the reaſon of which ſeems to be plain, becauſe their belief followed the biaſs and inclination of their nature, and they had not their natural notions embroiled and diſordered by obſcure and uncertain reaſonings about it, as the philoſophers had, whoſe underſtandings were perplexed with infinite niceties and objections, which never troubled the heads of the common people. By which means the vulgar had this advantage, that the natural dictates of their minds had their free courſe; and as they did not argue themſelves into this principle, ſo neither were their natural hopes and fears check'd and controlled by any objections to the contrary.

But then, this principle being only a kind of natural inſtinct in them, which did not awaken their minds by any deep conſideration and reaſoning about it, it had no great influence on their lives. For as they were not much troubled with doubts concerning it, ſo neither did they deeply attend to the conſequences of it: but as they followed the inclination of nature in the entertaining of this notion, ſo becauſe it was not entertained upon deep conſideration, it had no great effect upon them.

3. The learned among the heathen did not ſo generally agree in this principle, and thoſe who did conſent in it, were many of them more wavering and unſettled than the common people. Epicurus and his followers were peremptory in the denial of it: but by their own acknowledgment, they did herein offer great violence to their natures, and had much ado to diveſt themſelves of the contrary apprehenſions and fears. Therefore the poet, in the perſon of the epicurean, repreſents it as a rare piece of happineſs,

pineſs, and that which few attained to, to quit themſelves of the notions of another ſtate after this life. SERM. CLXXVII.

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoſcere cauſas,
Atque metus omnes & inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, ſtrepitumque acherontis avari.

The Stoicks were very inclinable to the belief of a future ſtate; but yet they almoſt every where ſpeak very doubtfully of it. Seneca and Antoninus often ſpeak to this purpoſe, that if the ſoul remain after this life, there's no doubt but that good men ſhall be happy, and bad men miſerable; but whether the ſoul out-live the body or not, that they could not poſitively determine. Ariſtotle hath ſome expreſs paſſages for the ſoul's immortality; but it ſeems he was not conſtant to himſelf in this matter, or elſe they have done him a great deal of wrong, who have wrote ſo many books on both ſides, concerning his opinion in this point. Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, and many others of the moſt eminent philoſophers, as Tully tells us, were full, not of aſſurance, but of very good hopes of the ſoul's immortality and a future ſtate. Socrates, who was one of the beſt and wiſeſt of all the heathens, does in his diſcourſes before his death, (as Plato relates them) ſupport and bear up himſelf againſt the terrors of death, only with this conſideration, that he was full of hopes that when he left this world, he ſhould paſs into a far happier and more perfect ſtate; that he ſhould go to GOD and live with him, and keep company with the ſpirits of good men: and that he is not poſitive and peremptory in it, is no argument that he doubted of this more than any thing elſe; for that was his faſhion in all his diſcourſes, to ſpeak modeſtly, and with ſome ſhew of doubt-

SERM. CLXXVII.

doubting, even concerning those things whereof he had the greatest assurance: but this is plain, that he was so well assured of it as to die chearfully, and to leave the world without any kind of disturbance, upon the hopes that he had conceived of another life; and surely they must be pretty confident hopes, that will bear up a man's spirit to such a height when he comes to die. In short, he told his friends the morning before he died, that he had as good assurance of the soul's immortality as human reason could give, and that nothing but a divine revelation could give him greater satisfaction. And to mention no more, Tully, the chief philosopher among the Romans, expresseth himself with a good degree of confidence in this matter. He argues excellently for it in several parts of his works; but particularly in his book *de Senectute*, he declares his own opinion of it, where, speaking to Scipio and Lælius, he says, "I do not see why I may not adventure to declare freely to you, what my thoughts are concerning death; and perhaps I may discern better than others what it is, because I am now by reason of my age not far from it. I believe, says he, that the fathers, those eminent persons and my particular friends, are still alive, and that they live the life which only deserves the name of life." And afterward, *Nec me solum ratio ac disputatio impulit ut ita crederem, sed nobilitas etiam summorum philosophorum & authoritas*; "nor has reason only and disputation brought me to this belief, but the famous judgment and authority of the chief philosophers." And having mentioned Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, he breaks out into this rapture, *Oh præclarum diem quum in illud animorum concilium cœtumque proficiscar, & cum ex*

hac

SERM. CLXXVII.

hâc turbâ & colluvione discedam! "Oh glorious day, "when I shall go unto the great council and assem- "bly of spirits, when I shall go out of this tumult "and confusion, and quit the sink of this world, "when I shall be gathered to all those brave spirits "who have left this world, and meet with Cato, the "greatest and best of mankind!" What could a Christian almost say with more extasy? And he concludes, *Quòd si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro, nec mihi hunc errorem quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo: sin mortuus, ut quidam minuti philosophi censent, nihil sentiam, non vereor ne hunc errorem meum mortui philosophi irrideant.*" "But if after all I am mistaken "herein, I am pleased with my error, which I "would not willingly part with whilst I live: and "if after my death (as some little philosophers sup- "pose) I shall be deprived of all sense, I have no "fear of being exposed and laughed at by them, "for this my mistake in the other world."

Thus you see what assurance the heathens had of this principle, and that there was a general inclination and propension in them to the belief of it; and as it was not firmly and upon good grounds believed among the common people; so neither was it doubted of or called in question among them. Among the philosophers it was a matter of great uncertainty, being stiffly denied by some, doubted of by others; and those who were most inclinable to the entertainment of it, do rather express their desires and hopes of it, than their full assurance concerning it. I come therefore,

Secondly, To the enquiry, what assurance the Jews had of the soul's immortality and a future

SERM. CLXXVII.

ſtate? And of this, I ſhall give you an account in theſe following particulars.

1. They had all the aſſurance which natural light, and the common reaſon of mankind does ordinarily afford men concerning this matter; they had common to them with the heathens, all the advantage that nature gives men to come to the knowledge of this truth. But that which I chiefly deſign to enquire into, is, what ſingular advantage they had above the heathens, by means of thoſe ſpecial revelations which were made to them from GOD. Therefore,

2. They had by divine revelation a fuller aſſurance of thoſe truths which have a nearer connexion with this principle, and which do very much tend to facilitate the belief of it; as namely, concerning the providence of GOD, and his intereſting himſelf particularly in the affairs of the world. In the hiſtory of Moſes they had a ſatisfactory account of the original of the world, that GOD made it, and that he had eminently interpoſed in the government of it; and had given ſeveral eminent teſtimonies of his providence, in the general deluge which was brought upon the world, and in the dreadful particular judgment from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbouring cities; in his ſpecial providence towards Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob; in that ſeries of miracles whereby their deliverance was wrought out of Egypt, and they were carried through the wilderneſs to the promiſed land; and in thoſe two ſtanding miracles of the fruitfulneſs of every ſixth year, becauſe the land was to reſt the ſeventh; and preſerving the land from the invaſion of enemies, when they came up to Jeruſalem three times a year; by which GOD did teſtify a very particular and immediate

mediate providence toward them. Now whatever gives assurance of GOD's providence, does very much facilitate the belief of a future state. Epicurus was well aware of the connexion of these principles; and therefore in order to the freeing of the minds of men from the fears of a future state, he makes way for it, by removing the providence of GOD, and denying that he either made the world, or concerned himself in the government of it.

And then besides this, the Jews had assurance of the existence of spirits, by the more immediate ministry of angels among them. And this does directly make way for the belief of an immaterial principle, and consequently of the soul's immortality. And this the Sadducees, who were a kind of Epicureans among the Jews, were sensible of; and therefore as they said that there was no resurrection and no future state after this life, so they denied that there was either angel or spirit, as the apostle tells us, Acts xxiii. 7. From whence by the way we may take notice of the great mistake of those, who, from the opinion of the Sadducees, argue that eternal life was not at all believed under the old testament; because if it had been so, it is not credible that it would have been disowned by those who acknowledged the authority of those books; whereas we see that they denied, to serve their hypothesis, other things which were most expressly revealed in the old testament, as the doctrine of angels and spirits.

3. There were some remarkable instances in the old testament, which did tend very much to persuade men to this truth; I mean the instances of Enoch and Elias, who did not die like other men, but were translated, and taken up into heaven in an extraordinary manner. From which instances it was obvi-

ous to conſiderate men, to reaſon, that GOD did intend by theſe examples to encourage good men with the hopes of another ſtate after this life. And accordingly the apoſtle to the Hebrews makes the belief of future rewards a neceſſary conſequence from this inſtance of Enoch's tranſlation, Heb. xi. 5, 6. "By faith Enoch was tranſlated, that he ſhould not "ſee death, and was not found, becauſe GOD had "tranſlated him: for before his tranſlation he had "this teſtimony, that he pleaſed GOD. But with-"out faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him: for he that "cometh to GOD, muſt believe that he is, and that "he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him."

4. This was typified and ſhadowed forth to them by the legal adminiſtrations. The whole œconomy of their worſhip and temple, of their rites and ceremonies, and ſabbaths, did ſhadow out ſome farther thing to them, though in a very obſcure manner: The land of Canaan, and their coming to the poſſeſſion of it, after ſo many years travel in the wilderneſs, did repreſent that heavenly inheritance which good men ſhould be poſſeſſed of after the troubles of this life. And theſe were intended by GOD to ſignify thoſe greater and better things to them, and ſo underſtood by thoſe who were more devout and knowing among them; elſe the apoſtle, in his epiſtle to the Hebrews, had gone upon a very ill ground, when he all along takes it for granted, that the diſpenſation of the law, and all the ceremonies of it, were of a farther ſignification, Heb. x. 11. "The law "having a ſhadow of good things to come."

5. This was in general, and by good conſequence, though not obvious to all, yet ſufficiently to prudent and diſcerning men, revealed in the book of the law taken preciſely; I mean the five books of Moſes. It

SERM. CLXXVII.

is said of Abel, that GOD was pleased with his sacrifice, though with Cain's he was not well pleased, Gen. iv. Upon this Cain was angry at his brother, and slew him. Now if the immortality of the soul and a future state, be not supposed and taken for granted in this story, this very passage is enough to cut the sinews, and pluck up the roots of all religion. For if there were no rewards after this life, it were obvious for every man to argue from this story, that it was a dangerous thing to please GOD; if this were all that Abel got by it, to be knocked on the head by his brother, who offended GOD.

But I shall chiefly insist on the general promises, which we find in these books of Moses, of GOD's blessing good men, and declaring that he was their GOD, even after their death. Now I shall shew that these promises did involve the happiness of another life, and were intended by GOD to signify thus much, and were so understood by good men under that dispensation. That these general promises did contain this sense under them, and were intended by GOD to signify thus much, is evident from our SAVIOUR's citation of that text, to confute the Sadducees, "I "am the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and "the GOD of Jacob;" from whence he reasons thus, "now GOD is not the GOD of the dead, but "of the living; for all live to him:" the force of which argument was directly and immediately levelled against the main error of the Sadducees, which was the denial of a future state. This our SAVIOUR immediately proves from this text, and by consequence the resurrection, which the Sadducees did not deny upon any other account, but because they did not * believe a future state.

* See sermon xxxvi. Vol. III.

6. Toward the expiration of the legal dispensation,

SERM. CLXXVII.

tion, there was yet a clearer revelation of a future ſtate. The text in Daniel ſeems to be much plainer than any in the old teſtament, Dan. xii. 2. "And "many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth "ſhall awake; ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome "to ſhame and everlaſting contempt." And to this text the ſeven brethren, who were cruelly put to death under the perſecution of Antiochus, ſeem to refer, when they comfort themſelves with the hopes of another life, 2 Mac. vii. 9. where one of them, ready to die, ſays thus to Antiochus, "thou like a fury "takeſt us out of this preſent life; but the king of "the world ſhall raiſe us up, who have died for his "laws, unto everlaſting life." To the ſame purpoſe another of them, ver. 14. when he was tormented, expreſſeth his confidence thus, "it is good, "being put to death by men, to look for hope from "GOD, to be raiſed up again by him: but as for "thee (ſpeaking of Antiochus) thou ſhalt have no "reſurrection to life." Where he ſeems to allude to the twofold reſurrection mentioned by Daniel. And though this hiſtory of the Maccabees be not canonical, yet the apoſtle hath warranted the truth of it to us, at leaſt in this particular, for he plainly refers to this ſtory, Heb. xi. 35. "Others were tor-"tured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection.

7. Notwithſtanding this, I ſay, that the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate, was not expreſly and clearly revealed in the old teſtament, at leaſt not in Moſes his law. The ſpecial and particular promiſes of that diſpenſation, were of temporal good things; and the great bleſſing of eternal life, was but ſomewhat obſcurely involved and ſignified in the types and general promiſes: for conſidering that the

the particular promises were plainly of temporal things, it was very obvious to those who were not so prudent and discerning to interpret the general promises, so as to comprehend only that kind of blessings, which were express'd in the special and particular promises, and so likewise to understand the general threatnings. And upon this account, the apostle to the Hebrews principally advanceth the new covenant of the gospel, above the old dispensation; because the gospel had clear, and express, and special promises of eternal life, which the law had not, Heb. viii. 6. "But now hath he obtained a more excel- "lent ministry, by how much also he is the Medi- "ator of a better covenant, which was established "upon better promises." For the same reason CHRIST is said here in the text, "by his appearance "to have abolished death, and brought life and "immortality to light through the gospel." And so I proceed to the

Second thing I propounded, which is to shew what farther evidence and assurance the gospel gives us of it, than the world had before; what clearer discoveries we have by CHRIST's coming, than the heathens or Jews had before.

That the gospel hath brought to us a clearer discovery of this than they had, is here expressly said; that GOD's gracious purpose concerning our salvation, which was, before the world began, decreed to be accomplished in CHRIST, is now made manifest by his coming into the world; ver. 9. "Who hath "saved and called us with an holy calling, not ac- "cording to our works, but according to his own "purpose and grace, which was given us in CHRIST "JESUS before the world began, but is now made "manifest, &c." Which is emphatically spoken,

now,

SERM. CLXXVII.

now, and not till now, importing that before the appearing of our SAVIOUR, it was in great meaſure hid from the world, and that men had very dark and obſcure apprehenſions of it, till it was "brought to "light by the goſpel." And this is not only affirmed in this place, but very frequently all over the new teſtament. I will mention ſome of the moſt expreſs places to this purpoſe, John vi. 8. When many of CHRIST's followers left him, he aſks the twelve, "will ye alſo go away?" To whom Peter anſwers, "LORD, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt "the words of eternal life." As if he had ſaid, what maſter ſhould we chuſe to follow rather than thee, who bringeſt to the world the glad tidings of eternal life? What diſcipline or inſtitution is there in the world, that gives ſuch encouragement to its followers? Others may promiſe great things in this world; but in the declarations and promiſes of another life, we cannot rely upon any one but him that comes from GOD, as we are fully perſuaded thou doſt; for it follows in the next verſe, "and we be-"lieve, and are ſure that thou art the CHRIST, the "Son of the living GOD."

Tit. ii. 10, &c. "The grace of GOD which brings "ſalvation hath appeared to all men, &c." Where the revelation of the goſpel is called "the grace of "GOD which brings ſalvation," that is, which diſcovers to the world that eternal happineſs, which was in a great meaſure hid from it before, and encourageth men by the hopes of that bleſſing to live a holy life. The apoſtle to the Hebrews doth all along in his epiſtle, uſe this as an argument to the Jews, to take them off from the Moſaical inſtitution, and to perſuade them to entertain the doctrine of the goſpel, as making clearer diſcoveries, and giving greater aſ-

ſurance

surance of eternal life and salvation, than the law did, Heb. ii. 2, 3, 4, 5. "For if the word spoken by "angels was stedfast, and every transgression and "disobedience received a just recompence of reward: "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salva- "tion, which at the first began to be spoken by the "LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that "heard him; GOD also bearing them witness, both "with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles "and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own "will? For unto the angels hath he not put in sub- "jection the world to come, whereof we speak." That is, if the promises and threatnings of the law, which was delivered but "by the ministry of angels," were made good, and the offenders under that dispensation were severely punished, what shall become of us, if we neglect the dispensation of the gospel, which reveals to us greater things, even eternal life and salvation, and which receiveth so great a confirmation both from CHRIST himself, by whom it was first delivered, and also from his apostles, who published it to the world, and gave testimony to it by so many miracles? And it follows, at ver. 5. "For "unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the "world to come, whereof we now speak." The meaning of which is this, the promises and threatnings of the law which was delivered by angels were temporal, and such as respected this world; but now GOD hath sent his son, he hath in him made promises of a greater salvation, he hath put into his hands the great things of another world, and hath given him power to promise eternal life, and to give it to as many as he pleases. So the danger of contemning the gospel must needs be much greater than that of the law, because the happiness which the

SERM. CLXXVII.

goſpel promiſes, is ſo much greater: For unto the angels, who delivered the law, GOD gave no power and commiſſion to make clear and expreſs promiſes of the rewards of another world. "Unto the angels "did he not put in ſubjection the world to come;" but ſo hath he done to his Son, "he hath commit-"ted all judgment to him, and hath given him "power to raiſe up thoſe who have done good, un-"to the reſurrection of life, and thoſe that have done "evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation:" As our SAVIOUR himſelf ſpeaks, John v. 22. and thus, "he hath put the world to come in ſubjection unto "his Son," having impowered him to encourage and argue men to the obedience of his laws, by the rewards and puniſhments of another world: whereas the law delivered by angels had only the ſanction of temporal threatnings and promiſes. Heb. vii. 16. The goſpel is called "the power of an eternal life," in oppoſition to the law, which is called "a carnal "commandment;" not only becauſe the precepts of it reſpected the body, but becauſe the promiſes of it were of temporal good things which belong to this life; and at the 19th verſe, the goſpel, in oppoſition to the Moſaical diſpenſation, is called "the bringing "in of a better hope. The law made nothing per-"fect: but the bringing in of a better hope did; "ἐπεισαγωγὴ, the ſuperinduction of a better hope;" by which the apoſtle plainly ſignifies, that this was the imperfection of the Moſaical diſpenſation, that it did not give men firm hopes and aſſurance of eternal life; but the goſpel hath ſuperinduced this hope, and thereby ſupplied the great defect of the former adminiſtration. To the ſame purpoſe he tells us, chap. viii. 6. that CHRIST "hath now obtained a "more excellent miniſtry, for as much as he is the

SERM CLXXVII

" Mediator of a better covenant, established upon " better promises." How better promises? why, instead of the promises of a temporal Canaan, and earthly blessings, CHRIST hath given us promises of eternal life and happiness. Therefore in the next chapter he is called " an high priest of the good things " to come:" and ver. 15. " For this cause" he is said to be " the mediator of the new testament, that " they which are called might receive the promise " of the eternal inheritance." Once more the apostle, chap. x. 1. makes this the great imperfection of the law, in opposition to the gospel, that it " had " only a shadow of good things to come, but not " the very image of the things;" that is, it did but darkly typify and shadow forth the things of another life, not give us so express an image, and lively representation of the rewards of another world, as the gospel does. Therefore St. John makes eternal life to be the great promise of the gospel, the great blessing which CHRIST hath revealed to the world, 1 John ii. 25. " this is the promise which he hath " promised, even eternal life." So that you see, that the full and clear discovery of eternal life is every where in the new testament attributed to CHRIST, and to the revelation which by him was made to the world.

It remains now, that I shew more particularly, wherein the gospel hath given the world greater evidence and assurance of a future state, than they had before.

1. The rewards of another life are most clearly revealed in the gospel. That GOD hath made a revelation of this by CHRIST is an advantage which the heathen wanted, who were destitute of divine revelation. There are many truths which men may

SERM. CLXXVII.

be well inclined to believe, and for the proof of which, the wiſer and more knowing ſort of men may be able to offer very fair and plauſible arguments; and yet for all this, they may have no confident aſſurance of them, or at leaſt may be very far from a well-grounded certainty, ſuch as will give reſt and ſatiſfaction to the mind of a conſiderate and inquiſitive man. All men are not capable of the force of a reaſon; nay, there are very few who can truly judge of the weakneſs or ſtrength of an argument. There are many things which admit of very plauſible arguments on both ſides; and the generality of men are very apt to be impoſed upon by very ſlight arguments, to be moved any way with ſome little ſhew and appearance of reaſon. So that when this principle of the ſoul's immortality came to be diſputed in the world, and the ſects of the philoſophers, the learned men of thoſe times, came to be divided in opinion about it, ſome diſputing directly againſt it, others doubting very much of it, and ſcarce any pretending to any great aſſurance of it, it was no wonder, if by this means many came to be in ſuſpence about it; but now divine revelation, when that comes, it takes away all doubting, and gives men aſſurance of that, concerning which they were uncertain before. For every man that believes a GOD, does firmly believe this principle, that whatever is revealed by him is true: But eſpecially if the revelation be clear and expreſs, then it gives full ſatisfaction to the mind of man, and removes all jealouſy and ſuſpicions of the contrary. And this is a great advantage which the goſpel gives us in this matter, above what the Jews had. They had ſome kind of revelation and diſcovery of this under the diſpenſation of the law; but very darkly, in types and ſhadows: but the goſpel gives us a moſt expreſs revelation

velation of it, is full of special promises to this purpose, made in clear words, free from all ambiguity, or liableness to be interpreted to another sense. So that if we compare the law and the gospel together, we shall see a vast difference as to this matter. Under the law, the promise of eternal life was only comprehended in some general words, from which a man that had true notions of GOD and religion might be able to infer, that GOD intended some reward for good men, and punishment for wicked men, beyond this life: but the promises of temporal good things were special and express, and their law was full of them. Contrariwise in the new testament, the most special and express promise is that of eternal life, and this the books of the new testament are full of: as for temporal blessings, they are but sparingly and obscurely promised in comparison of the other.

2. The rewards of another life, as they are clearly and expressly revealed by the gospel, so that they may have the greater power and influence upon us, and we may have the greater assurance of them, they are revealed with very particular circumstances. And herein the gospel gives us a great advantage, both above the heathens and Jews. For though a man was satisfied in general of a state after this life, that mens souls should survive their bodies, and pass into another world, where it shall be well with them that have done well in this world, and ill to those that have done ill; yet no man, without a revelation, could conjecture the particular circumstances of that state. What wild descriptions do the heathen poets, who were their most ancient divines, make of heaven and hell, of the Elysian fields, and the infernal regions! But now the gospel, for our greater assurance and satisfaction, hath revealed many particular circumstances

SERM. CLXXVII.

cumſtances of the future ſtate to us; as that all men at the end of the world ſhall be ſummoned to make a ſolemn appearance before the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whom GOD hath made judge of the world, as a reward of his patience and ſufferings; that the bodies of men ſhall, in order to that appearance, be raiſed up by the mighty power of GOD, and united to their ſouls, that as they have been inſtruments of the ſoul in acts of holineſs and ſin, ſo they may take part likewiſe in the happineſs and torments of it. There are ſeveral other circumſtances the goſpel hath revealed to us concerning our future ſtate, which had they not been revealed, we could never have known, hardly have conjectured; in all which, beſides the aſſurance that they are revealed, it is a great ſatisfaction to us, that there is nothing in them that is unworthy of GOD, or that ſavours of the weakneſs and vanity of human imagination.

3. The goſpel gives us yet farther aſſurance of theſe things, by ſuch an argument as is like to be the moſt convincing and ſatisfactory to common capacities; and that is by a lively inſtance of the thing to be proved, in "raiſing CHRIST from the dead," Acts xvii. 30, 31.

It is true indeed, under the old teſtament there were two inſtances ſomewhat of this nature; Enoch and Elias were immediately tranſlated, and taken up alive into heaven; but theſe two inſtances do in many reſpects fall ſhort of the other. For after CHRIST was raiſed from the dead, he converſed forty days with his diſciples, and ſatisfied them that he was riſen; after which he was in their ſight viſibly taken up into heaven: and as an evidence that he was poſſeſſed of his glorious kingdom, he ſent down, according to his promiſe, his holy Spirit in miraculous gifts,

gifts, to assure them by those testimonies of his royalty, that he was in heaven, and to qualify them by those miraculous powers to convince the world of the truth of their doctrine.

Now what argument more proper to convince them of another life after this, than to see a man raised from the dead, and restored to a new life? What fitter to satisfy a man concerning heaven, and the happy estate of those there, than to see one visibly taken up into heaven? And what more fit to assure us, that the promises of the gospel are real, and shall be made good to us, than to see him who made these promises to us, raise himself from the dead, and go up into heaven, and from thence to dispense miraculous gifts and powers abroad in the world, as evidences of the power and authority which he was invested withal? All the philosophical arguments that a man can bring for the soul's immortality, and another life, will have no force upon vulgar apprehensions, in comparison of these sensible demonstrations, which give an experiment of the thing, and furnish us with an instance of something of the same kind, and of equal difficulty with that which is propounded to our belief.

4. And lastly, the effects which the clear discovery of this truth had upon the world, are such, as the world never saw before, and are a farther inducement to persuade us of the truth and the reality of it. After the gospel was entertained in the world, to shew, that those who embraced it did fully believe this principle, and were abundantly satisfied concerning the rewards and happiness of another life, they did for the sake of their religion despise this life and all the enjoyments of it, from a thorough persuasion of a far greater happiness than any this world could afford,

SERM. CLXXVII.

ford, remaining in the next life. With what chearfulneſs did they ſuffer perſecutions, with what joy and triumph did they welcome torments, and embrace death, "knowing in themſelves that they had "in heaven a better and more enduring ſubſtance!" Thus when "life and immortality was brought to "light by the goſpel," death was as it were quite aboliſhed; thoſe of the weakeſt age and ſex, women and children, did familiarly encounter it with as great a bravery, and bore up againſt the terrors of it with as much courage, as any of the greateſt ſpirits among the Romans ever did: and this not in a few inſtances, but in vaſt numbers. No emperor in the world ever had ſo numerous an army of perſons reſolved to fight for him, as this "captain of "our ſalvation, this prince of life and glory" had of perſons couragiouſly reſolved, and chearfully contented to die for him.

Now this wonderful effect, the like of which the world never ſaw before, was very ſuitable to the nature of this doctrine. Suppoſe that GOD from heaven ſhould have given men aſſurance of another life after this, in which good men ſhould be unſpeakably happy: what more reaſonable to imagine, than that perſons ſo aſſured ſhould deſpiſe this life, and all the enjoyments of it, in compariſon of the eternal and unconceivable happineſs, which they were perſuaded they ſhould be made partakers of in another world? So that whatever aſſurance an expreſs and clear revelation from GOD of the ſoul's immortality and another life, together with the particular circumſtances of that ſtate; whatever aſſurance a lively inſtance and example of the thing, in the perſon of him who brings this doctrine to the world; whatever conſequent miracles, and ſuitable effects upon the

SERM. CLXXVII.

the minds of men to such a principle: I say, whatever assurance and satisfaction these can give of this principle, all this the gospel hath given us, beyond whatever the heathens or Jews had before.

The inference I shall make from this discourse shall be only this; that if there be such a state after this life, then how does it concern every man to provide for it? Every action that we do in this life will have a good or bad influence upon our everlasting condition, and the consequences of it will extend themselves to eternity. Did men seriously consider this, that they carry about them immortal souls that shall live for ever, they would not trifle away the opportunities of this life, bend all their thoughts, and imploy their designs in the present gratification of their senses, and the satisfaction of their fleshly part, which shall shortly die and moulder into dust: but they would make provision for the state which is beyond the grave, and lay designs for eternity, which is infinitely the most considerable duration; they would not, like children, take care for the present, without any prospect to the future, and lay out all they have to please themselves for a day, without any regard to the remaining part of their lives. Nothing can be more unbecoming Christians, whose whole religion pretends to be built upon the firm belief of another world, than to be intent upon the things of this present life, to the neglect of their souls and all eternity.

Seeing then we pretend to be assured of immortal life, and to have clear discoveries of everlasting happiness and glory, as we hope to be made partakers of this portion, let us live as it becomes the candidates of heaven, those that are heirs of another world, and "the children of the resurrection, that this

" grace of GOD, which hath brought ſalvation, may
" teach us to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts,
" and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this
" preſent life, looking for that bleſſed hope, and the
" glorious appearing of the great GOD, and our
" SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST."

SERMON CLXXVIII.

Of the certainty of a future judgment.

---

2 COR. v. 10.

For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of CHRIST, *that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

SERM. CLXXVIII. The firſt ſermon on this text.

THE apoſtle, in the beginning of this chapter, expreſſeth his earneſt deſire, if GOD ſaw it fit, to quit " this earthly tabernacle, for a houſe not " made with hands, eternal in the heavens, to be " abſent from the body, and preſent with the LORD." But however GOD ſhould diſpoſe of him, he tells us that he made it his conſtant endeavour, ſo to behave himſelf, that both in this preſent ſtate, whilſt he continued in the body, and when he ſhould quit it, and appear before GOD, he might be approved and accepted of him. And that which made him ſo careful was, becauſe there was a day certainly coming, wherein every man muſt give an account of himſelf to the great judge of the world, and receive the juſt recompence of his actions done in this life, v. 9, 10. " Wherefore we labour, that whether " preſent

" preſent or abſent, we may be accepted of him. " For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat " of CHRIST, that every one may receive the things " done in the body, according to that he hath done, " whether it be good or bad."

Which words are ſo plain and powerful, ſo eaſy to be underſtood, and of ſuch a mighty force and influence, if thoroughly believed, that the very repeating of them is ſufficient to awaken men to a ſerious care of their lives and actions, and a powerful conſideration to perſuade them to do every thing, with reſpect to that ſolemn account they muſt one day make to GOD of all the actions done in this life.

But that the truth contained in them, may make the greater impreſſion upon us, I ſhall diſtinctly conſider the words, and handle, as briefly as I can, the ſeveral propoſitions contained in them.

The general and principal propoſition contained in theſe words is, the certainty of a future judgment.

But beſides this principal propoſition, which comprehends the general meaning and intention of theſe words, there are four other more particular propoſitions contained in them.

Firſt, That the adminiſtration of this judgment will be committed to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; for which reaſon the tribunal before which we muſt appear, is called, " the judgment-ſeat of CHRIST. " We muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of " CHRIST."

Secondly, That all men are liable to this judgment; no perſon of what condition ſoever ſhall be exempted from it. " We muſt all appear."

Thirdly, That all the actions which men have done in this life ſhall then come to account, and they

SERM. CXXLVIII.

shall be judged for them. "That every one may "receive the things done in the body."

Fourthly, That sentence will then be past according to the quality of mens actions, whether good or bad: "every one shall receive according to that he "hath done, whether it be good or evil."

But I shall at present only speak to the principal proposition contained in the words, concerning the certainty of a future and general judgment, viz. That at the end of the world, there shall be a general and publick assize, when all persons that have lived in this world (except only the judge himself, our blessed SAVIOUR, who is "the man ordained "by GOD to judge the world)" shall come upon their trial, and all the actions which they have done shall come under a strict examination; and according as men have demeaned themselves in this world towards GOD and man, they shall receive sentence, and rewards shall be distributed to them, according to the nature and quality of their actions. And though all these particulars be not expressed in the text, yet they are virtually contained in the general expressions of it, and fully and clearly delivered in other texts of scripture.

The truth and certainty of a future and general judgment, I shall endeavour to confirm from these three heads of arguments.

I. From the acknowledgments of natural light.

II. From the notions which men generally have of GOD and his providence.

III. From express and clear revelation of holy scripture.

I. From the acknowledgments of natural light. And I might shew the general consent of mankind in this matter, by all sorts of human testimonies, and from

from all kinds of writers in all ages: but this would be almoſt endleſs, and not ſo proper for a plain and practical diſcourſe upon this ſubject. And therefore paſſing by teſtimonies, I ſhall mainly inſiſt upon this, that the conſciences of men do ſecretly acknowledge a difference between good and evil. Hence it is that men find great peace and quiet and ſatisfaction of mind, in the doing of good and virtuous actions, and have ſecret and comfortable hopes, that this kind of actions will ſome time or other be conſidered and rewarded; and they are apt to maintain theſe hopes, and to ſupport themſelves with them, even when they deſpair to meet with any reward of their good and honeſt actions in this world.

And on the other hand, men find a ſecret fear and horror, and are inwardly aſhamed and confounded in their own minds, when they are about a wicked enterprize, and engaged in an ill deſign; their conſciences check them and terrify them, and their own minds bode ill to them, as if miſchief and vengeance would overtake them one time or other; and this, when no eye ſees them, and what they are a doing does not fall under the cognizance of any human court or tribunal, nor is liable to any cenſure or puniſhment from any human authority; yet for all that, they have many ſtings and laſhes from their own minds, feel many checks and rebukes from their own conſciences, when they do any thing which they ought not to do, though no man can charge them with it, or call them to an account for it.

Now theſe hopes and fears do argue, if not the firm belief and perſuaſion of a future judgment, yet great ſuſpicions and miſgivings of it in bad men; and in good men, ſecret and comfortable apprehenſions concerning it. From whence elſe can it be, that

SERM. CLXXVIII.

that good men, though they find that virtue is discountenanced, and goodneſs many times ſuffers, and is perſecuted in this world, and that the beſt actions and deſigns are often unſucceſsful; whence I ſay, is it that good men, notwithſtanding this, bear up and perſiſt in their courſe, but becauſe they have this inward apprehenſion and perſuaſion, that there will be a time, when virtue and goodneſs will be conſidered and rewarded, though not in this world? And whence is it, that bad men, though they proſper in their impiety, are yet guilty and fearful and timorous; but becauſe they ſtand in awe of a being, greater and more righteous and more powerful than themſelves; but becauſe they have ſome ſecret apprehenſions of an inviſible judge, and inward preſage of a future vengeance, which ſooner or later will overtake them; and becauſe they believe there will be a time when all the wickedneſs they have done ſhall be accounted for? Inſomuch that when they have done what they can, they cannot ſhake off theſe fears, nor quit themſelves of theſe apprehenſions of divine juſtice, threatening and purſuing them for their evil deeds. All which are plain acknowledgments of a natural apprehenſion and perſuaſion born with us, and riveted in our minds, concerning a future judgment.

II. This will farther appear from the natural notions which men have of a GOD, and his providence. This is eſſential to the notion of a GOD, that he is good, and holy, and juſt; and conſequently, that he loves goodneſs, and hates iniquity; and therefore it muſt be agreeable to his nature, to countenance the one, and to diſcountenance the other, in ſuch a manner as becomes the wiſe ſovereign and governor of the world. Now this cannot be ſolemn-

ly

ly and openly done, but by a publick distribution of rewards and punishments; and this we see is not done in this world. The dispensations of God's providence in this world, toward good and bad men, are many times very promiscuous, and very cross, and contrary to what might be expected from the wise and just sovereign of the world, from one whom we believe to love righteousness, and to hate iniquity. For virtuous and holy men are often ill treated in this world, grievously harassed and afflicted, and that "for righteousness sake;" and bad men many times flourish, and are prosperous, "they are not in trouble "like other men, neither are they plagued like other "men." And this is a very great objection against the providence of God; if there were no other consideration had of virtue and vice, no other kind of retribution made to good and bad men, but what we see in this world. And therefore the justice of the divine providence seems to require, that there should be a day of recompence, and a solemn and publick distribution of rewards and punishments to the righteous and to the wicked. For this is plainly a state of trial and probation, of patience, and forbearance to sinners, and of exercise to good men; and being a state of trial, it is not so proper a season for the distribution of publick justice. But since the justice of God doth not appear in this world, it seems very reasonable to believe, that there will be a time when it will be made manifest, and every eye shall see it; that God will one day fully vindicate his righteousness, and acquit the honour of his justice, and that there shall be a general assize held, when all men shall have a fair and open trial, and "God will "render to every man according to his works."

Now the justice of God's providence is in a great

SERM. CLXXVIII.

great measure hid and covered, but there will come ἡμέρα ἀποκαλύψεως (as the apostle calls the day of judgment, Rom. ii. 5.) "a day of the revelation "of the righteous judgment of GOD, when he will "bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his "judgment as the noon-day, and every mouth "shall be stopped," and every conscience and heart of man acknowledge "the righteous judgment of "GOD."

And in the mean time GOD contents himself to give some particular and remarkable instances of his rewarding and punishing justice, in this world, which may be to us an earnest of a future and general judgment; he is pleased sometimes in the dispensations of his providence, clearly to separate and distinguish "the precious from the vile," remarkably to deliver good men, and "to snare the wicked in the "works of their own hands." Sometimes he gives good men some foretastes of heaven, some earnest of their future happiness in this life: and on the other hand, he many times gives sinners some *præjudicia divini judicii*, some intimations of a future judgment, and shadows of that "utter darkness," where they are to dwell for ever; he drops down now and then a little of hell into the conscience of a sinner. That fire which is kindled in some mens consciences in this life, that unspeakable anguish, and those inexplicable horrors, which some sinners have felt in this world, may serve to give us notice of the extreme severity of the divine justice towards impenitent sinners; that miraculous deluge that swept away the old world; those stupendous and terrible showers of fire and brimstone, which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about; that dreadful earthquake, which swallowed

up Corah and his company, and let them down as it were quick into hell, may ſerve for pledges and earneſts to us of the diſmal puniſhments and torments of the next world.

But notwithſtanding all theſe particular and remarkable inſtances of the divine juſtice, yet conſidering how unequal and promiſcuous the greateſt part of GOD's providences are in this world, it is highly requiſite, that there ſhould be a general judgment, for a more clear and full manifeſtation of the juſtice and equity of the divine providence.

II. But this will moſt evidently appear from the clear and expreſs revelation of the holy ſcripture. I will not cite texts out of the old teſtament to this purpoſe, becauſe theſe things were but obſcurely revealed to the Jews in compariſon, "life and immor-"tality being brought to light by the goſpel." Yet St. Jude tells us, that there was an early revelation of this to the old world, ver. 14, 15. "And Enoch "alſo the ſeventh from Adam propheſied of theſe, "ſaying, behold the LORD cometh with ten thou-"ſands of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all, "and to convince all that are ungodly." But whether this refer to the flood, or the final judgment of the world, is not ſo clear and certain; however this is moſt plainly revealed by our bleſſed LORD and SAVIOUR, in the new teſtament. The proceſs of this great day, with ſeveral of the particular circumſtances of it, are fully deſcribed by our SAVIOUR, Matt. xxv. and in the viſion of St. John, Rev. xx. 11, 12, 13. And the apoſtles of our LORD and SAVIOUR do moſt frequently declare and inculcate it. Acts xvii. 30, 31. "But now commandeth all men every where "to repent: becauſe he hath appointed a day, in the "which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by

SERM. CLXXVIII.

" that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath " given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised " him from the dead." Rom. ii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. where speaking of the day of judgment, he calls it, " the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous " judgment of GOD; who will render to every man " according to his deeds: to them, who by patient " continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and ho- " nour, and immortality, eternal life: but unto them " that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, " but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath, " tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man " that doth evil." 1 Pet. i. 17. " And if ye call on " the father, who without respect of persons judgeth " according to every man's work." 2 Pet. iii. 10. " But the day of the LORD will come, in which the " heavens shall pass away with a great noise, &c."

Thus you see the truth and certainty of a future judgment confirmed, from the acknowledgments of mens natural hopes and fears, from the natural notions which men have concerning GOD and his providence, and from plain revelation of scripture.

All that I shall do farther at present shall be to make some reflections upon what hath been delivered, concerning the certainty of a future general judgment. And,

I. If there be such a day certainly a coming, it may justly be matter of wonder and astonishment to us, to see the general impiety and stupidity of men, how wicked they are, and how careless of their lives and actions, and how insensible of that " great and " terrible day of the LORD," which is coming upon all flesh, and for any thing we know to the contrary, may be very near us, and " even at the door." How securely do the great part of men pass away their time,

some

ſome in worldly buſineſs, others in worldly pleaſures and vanity, and a great many in wickedneſs and vice? Surely ſuch men have no apprehenſions of a future judgment; ſurely they do not believe that there will be any memorial of their actions in another world, and that they ſhall be called to a ſtrict and ſevere account for all the actions of this life; they do not think that there is a juſt and powerful being above them, who now obſerves every thing that they do, and will one day judge them for; that there is a pen always writing, and making a faithful record of all the paſſages of their lives; and that theſe volumes ſhall one day be produced and "opened, and men ſhall be "judged out of the things that are written in them;" and all our thoughts, words, and actions ſhall paſs under a moſt ſevere trial and examination.

Or if men do believe theſe things, they ſtifle and ſuppreſs this belief, and "detain this great truth of "GOD in unrighteouſneſs;" they do not attend to it, and conſider it, that it may have it's due awe and influence upon their lives. For it is not imaginable, that if men were poſſeſs'd with a firm belief and perſuaſion of this "great and terrible day of the LORD," they ſhould be ſo careleſs and ſecure, as we ſee they are, and have ſo little regard to what they do; that they ſhould paſs whole days, and weeks, and years, in the groſs neglect of GOD and religion, and of their immortal ſouls; that they ſhould "ſpend their days "in vanity, and their years in pleaſure;" that they ſhould live in a continued courſe of impiety and profaneneſs, of leudneſs and intemperance, in the curſed habits of ſwearing and curſing; which are now grown ſo common among us, that a man cannot walk in the ſtreet, without having his ears grated with this helliſh noiſe; and that they ſhould go on in

SERM. CLXXVIII.

these courses, without any great regret or disturbance, as if no danger attended them, as if justice were asleep, and all their actions would be buried with them, and never rise up against them.

What can we resolve this into, but either into habitual or actual atheism and infidelity? Either men do not at all believe a judgment to come; or else they do not actually consider it, and attend to the natural and proper consequences of such a belief. One of these two is necessary. It seems very hard to charge the generality of wicked men with habitual atheism and unbelief, but that the Spirit of GOD in scripture so often does it. Psal. xiv. 1. "The fool "hath said in his heart, there is no GOD." How doth that appear? It follows, "they are corrupt, "they have done abominable works, there is none "that doth good." And Psal. xxxvi. 1. "The "transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, "there is no fear of GOD before his eyes." David speaks as if the wicked practices of men did convince him, that they had no belief and apprehension of a GOD.

Nay, even after those clear discoveries which the gospel hath made of a future judgment, our SAVIOUR seems to foretel a general infidelity among men, at least as to this particular article of a future judgment, Luke xviii. 8. "Nevertheless when the Son of "man shall come, shall he find faith upon the earth?" And St. Peter tells us, 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. that "there "shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after "their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise "of his coming?" that is, deriding the belief and expectation which the Christians had of a future judgment.

But to be sure, if the generality of men be not already sunk thus low, as to disbelieve these things,

yet this at leaſt is evident from the lives of men, that they are ſtrangely inconſiderate, and guilty of the moſt groſs and ſtupid inadvertency that can befal reaſonable creatures. For I dare appeal to any man of underſtanding and ſerious conſideration, whether a greater folly and madneſs can be imagined, than for men to profeſs in good earneſt to believe, that there is a day ſhortly coming, wherein they ſhall appear before the impartial tribunal of the great judge of the world, and all the actions of their lives ſhall be ranſacked and laid open, and that there is not any thing that ever they did, that ſhall eſcape a ſevere cenſure; yea, and farther to be perſuaded, that as it ſhall upon that trial appear, that they have demeaned themſelves in this world, they ſhall be ſentenced to an eternal and unchangeable ſtate, of happineſs or miſery, in the other world; and yet after all this conviction, to live at ſuch a mad and careleſs rate, as no man in reaſon can live, but he that is undoubtedly certain of the contrary of all this, and verily perſuaded in his heart, that not one ſyllable of what the goſpel ſays concerning theſe matters, is true; this is ſo incredible a ſtupidity and folly, that did not frequent and undeniable experience make us ſure of the truth of it, out of mere charity and reſpect to human nature, it were not to be believed. "Conſider this "all ye that forget GOD, and put far from you the "evil day; conſider and ſhew yourſelves men, O ye "tranſgreſſors!" who profeſs to believe a future judgment, and yet run the hazard of it, as if ye had no fear and ſuſpicion of any ſuch thing.

II. Having conſidered, not without wonder and aſtoniſhment, what manner of perſons the generality of men are, notwithſtanding all the aſſurance we have of a future judgment, let us in the next place conſider,

SERM. CLXXVIII.

der, "seeing these things shall be, what manner of "persons we ought to be in all holy conversation "and godliness, waiting for, and hastening unto the "coming of the day of GOD," as the apostle argues, 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12. How should the serious belief of this great principle of religion work upon us, that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of "CHRIST, that every one may receive the things "done in the body, according to that he hath done, "whether it be good or evil?" St. Paul tells us, that the consideration of it had a mighty awe and influence upon him, to be careful of himself, and to be concerned for others: to be careful of himself, in the verse before the text, "wherefore we labour that "whether present or absent, we may be accepted of "him. For we must all appear before the judg-"ment seat of CHRIST." And to be concerned for others, that they may prevent the terrors of that day, in the verse immediately after the text, "knowing "therefore the terror of the LORD, we persuade "men. Knowing the terror of the LORD;" it were no difficult matter to make such a dreadful representation of this "great and terrible day of the LORD," as would affright the stoutest sinner, and make every joint of him to tremble: but it is much more desirable, that men should be wrought upon by reason, and convinced and persuaded by a calm and sober consideration of things; because that is likely to have a better and more lasting effect, than present terror and amazement; and therefore I shall content myself with the naked representation of the thing, in the plain and powerful expressions of the holy scriptures. Imagine then thou sawest "the Son of man coming "in great power and great glory, and all his holy "angels with him;" that thou heardest the great trumpet

trumpet ſound, and a mighty voice piercing the heavens and the earth, ſaying, "Ariſe, ye dead, and "come to judgment." Suppoſe thou ſaweſt "the "thrones ſet, and the great judge ſitting upon the "throne of his glory, and all nations gathered be-"fore him, and all the dead, both ſmall and great, "ſtanding before GOD, the books opened, and the "dead judged out of the things written in thoſe "books:" and the ſeveral ſentences pronounced from the mouth of CHRIST himſelf, "Come ye bleſ-"ſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared "for you, from the foundation of the world;" and, "Depart ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for "the devil and his angels." Would not this be a dreadful and amazing ſight! Why the goſpel plainly declares that all this ſhall be, and thou profeſſeſt to believe it. Why then doſt thou not live as if thou didſt believe theſe things; Why ſhould not that which will certainly be, have to all reaſonable purpoſes the ſame effect upon thee, as if it were already and actually preſent? Why do men ſuffer themſelves to be diverted from the attentive conſideration of ſo important a matter, by the impertinent trifles of this world? Why do we not make wiſe and ſpeedy preparation for "that day," which "will cer-"tainly come?" but we are uncertain when it will come, for "it will come as a thief in the night, and "as a ſnare upon all them that dwell on the face of "the whole earth." Why doſt thou ſtifle thy conſcience, and drown the loud cries of it, with the din and noiſe of worldly buſineſs? Why doſt thou at any time check and ſuppreſs the thoughts of a future judgment, and "put far from thee the evil day?" and not rather ſuffer the terrors of it to haunt and purſue thee, till they have made thee weary of thy wicked

SERM. CLXXVIII

wicked life, till they have reclaimed thee to thy duty, and effectually perſuaded thee, "to break off thy "ſins by repentance;" and to reſolve upon ſuch a holy and virtuous courſe of life, that thou mayſt be able, not only with peace and comfort, but with joy and triumph, to entertain the thoughts of that day?

Reaſon thus with thyſelf, if this day be ſo dreadful at a diſtance, that I can hardly now bear the thoughts of it, how inſupportable will the thing itſelf be, when it comes to be preſent; and if it will come nevertheleſs, nor the later for my not thinking of it, is it not reaſonable, inſtead of putting away the thoughts of it, to endeavour by all poſſible means to prevent the terrors of it?

We eſpecially, who profeſs ourſelves Chriſtians, and live in the clear light of the goſpel, ought to conſider, that we cannot plead ignorance for our excuſe, as the heathen world might. We read and hear the goſpel every day, "wherein the wrath of "GOD is clearly revealed againſt all ungodlineſs and "unrighteouſneſs of men:" So that if we continue impenitent, we have no cloak, no excuſe for ourſelves; wo unto as above all others! "It ſhall be "more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and "Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for us. "The times of ignorance," ſaith St. Paul, ſpeaking of the heathen world, "the times of this ignorance "GOD winked at; but now he commands all men "every where to repent, becauſe he hath appointed "a day, in which he will judge the world in righ-"teouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained, "whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in "that he hath raiſed him from the dead." Thus much concerning the general propoſition, the certainty of a future judgment.

SER-

SERMON CLXXIX.

Of the person by whom the world shall be judged.

2 COR. v. 20.

For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, *that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

SERM. CLXXIX. The second sermon on this text.

IN these words, besides the general point mainly intended, concerning the certainty of a future and general judgment, there are likewise several particular propositions.

First, That the administration of this judgment is committed to the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Secondly, That all men are liable to this judgment.

Thirdly, That all the actions which men have done in this life shall then come to account, and they shall be judged for them.

Fourthly, That this sentence shall be past upon men according to the nature and quality of their actions, whether good or evil. I have handled the general point, the certainty of a future judgment: I shall now proceed to the particular propositions contained in the text, and shall handle them in the order in which I have proposed them.

First, That the administration of this judgment is committed to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and that he is the person constituted and ordained of GOD, to be the judge of the world. The tribunal before which

SERM. CLXXIX.

we muſt ſtand, is here in the text called "the judg-"ment ſeat of CHRIST." "We muſt all appear "before the judgment-ſeat of CHRIST." In the proſecution of this I ſhall,

Firſt, Endeavour to confirm and illuſtrate the truth of this propoſition.

Secondly, Draw ſome inferences from it, by way of application.

Firſt, For the confirmation of it, I ſhall do theſe two things.

I. Prove it from clear teſtimony of ſcripture.

II. Endeavour to give ſome account of this oeconomy and diſpenſation; why GOD hath committed the adminiſtration of this great work to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; in all which I ſhall rely only upon ſcripture, the thing being capable of no other proof or evidence. And indeed the whole mediatory undertaking of our bleſſed SAVIOUR, and all the circumſtances of it, are matter of pure revelation; this is "the hidden and manifold wiſdom of GOD, which "none of the princes and philoſophers of this world "knew," and which we could not poſſibly have found out and diſcovered, had not GOD been pleaſed to reveal it to us.

I. I ſhall prove this from expreſs teſtimony of ſcripture, that the LORD JESUS CHRIST is the perſon conſtituted and ordained by GOD, to adminiſter the judgment of the great day. Matt. xiii. 40, 41, 42, 43. "So ſhall it be in the end of this world. "The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and "they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things "that offend, and them which do iniquity; and "ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire: there ſhall be "wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. Then ſhall the "righteous ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of

"their

SERM. CLXXIX.

" their father." Here our SAVIOUR is repreſented as the chief miniſter of GOD's juſtice, in the diſtribution of rewards to the righteous and the wicked; and though the effect and execution of the ſentence only be expreſs'd, yet it ſuppoſeth a judicial proceſs preceding. So likewiſe Matt. xvi. 27. " For the " Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, " with his holy angels, and then he ſhall reward every " man according to his work." " Shall come in the " glory of his Father," that is, with his authority committed to him. Matt. xxiv. 30. where our SAVIOUR ſpeaking of his coming to judge the world, it is ſaid, " then ſhall appear the ſign of the Son of " man in heaven, and then ſhall all the tribes of the " earth mourn; and they ſhall ſee the Son of man " coming in the clouds of heaven with power and " great glory;" that is, in order to the judgment of the world. But moſt fully and expreſly, Matt. xxv. 31. where you have the manner of his coming particularly deſcribed, together with the ſolemn repreſentation of the proceſs of that day. " When the " Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the " holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the " throne of his glory: And before him ſhall be ga- " thered all nations, and he ſhall ſeparate the one from " another, as the ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from " the goats: And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right " hand, but the goats on the left. Then ſhall the " king ſay to them on his right hand, &c." You ſee the whole adminiſtration of this judgment, and the management of every part of it, is committed to CHRIST. John v. 22. Our SAVIOUR there produceth his commiſſion, and tells us from whence this authority was derived to him. " The Father judg- " eth no man, but hath committed all judgment to

SERM. CLXXIX.

" the Son." And ver. 27. " He hath given him " authority also to execute judgment, because he is " the Son of man." Acts x. 42. " And he com- " manded us to preach unto the people, and to tes- " tify that it is he that is ordained of GOD, to be the " judge of quick and dead." Acts xvii. 31. " He " hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the " world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath " ordained," that is, by JESUS CHRIST; for it follows, " whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, " in that he hath raised him from the dead." Rom. ii. 16. " In the day when GOD shall judge the secrets " of men by JESUS CHRIST." Rom. xiv. 10. " We shall all stand before the judgment seat of " CHRIST." 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9. The apostle there speaking of the day of judgment, describes it thus; " When the LORD JESUS shall be revealed from " heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, " taking vengeance on all them that know not GOD, " and obey not the gospel of his Son; who shall be " punished with everlasting destruction from the pre- " sence of the LORD, and from the glory of his " power." 2 Tim. iv. 1. " I charge thee, saith St. " Paul there to Timothy, before GOD, and the LORD " JESUS CHRIST, who shall judge the quick and the " dead at his appearing, and his kingdom." Rev. xxii. 12. " Behold I come quickly, saith our LORD, " and my reward is with me, to give to every man " according as his work shall be." I proceed to the

II. Thing I proposed, namely, to give some account, why GOD hath committed the administration of this work, into the hands of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And of this I shall give an account in these two particulars.

1. GOD thought fit to confer this honour upon CHRIST,

CHRIST, as a ſuitable reward of his patience and ſufferings. SERM. CLXXIX.

2. He thought fit likewiſe hereby to declare the righteouſneſs and equity of his judgment, in that mankind is judged by one in their own nature, a man like themſelves.

1. GOD hath thought fit to confer this honour upon CHRIST, as a ſuitable reward of his obedience and ſufferings, of his coming into the world by his appointment, to undertake the work of our redemption, and to mediate a reconciliation between GOD and us, of his voluntary ſubmiſſion to a condition ſo mean and low, to that poverty and contempt, and to thoſe extreme ſufferings which he did ſo patiently undergo, in the proſecution of this great deſign.

That GOD hath committed all power to CHRIST, with deſign to put an honour upon him, our SAVIOUR himſelf tells us, John v. 22, 23. "The Fa-"ther judgeth no man, but hath committed all "judgment to the Son; that all men ſhould honour "the Son, even as they honour the Father." The ſcripture ſpeaks of this matter, as if when CHRIST undertook the great work of our redemption, it were expreſly covenanted between GOD the Father and him, that he ſhould undertake this work, and ſubmit to all thoſe grievous things, which were neceſſary to be done and ſuffered, in order to the effecting of it; and that when he had accompliſhed it, GOD would confer this glory upon him, that in his human nature he ſhould be "exalted to the right-hand "of GOD, and have power given him over all fleſh, "to judge the world, and to give eternal life to as "many as he pleaſed;" and when he had received this reward, that then his mediatory office ſhould ceaſe, and he ſhould "reſign up the kingdom to GOD

SERM. CLXXIX.

" God the Father, that God might be all in all." This is the ſcope and deſign of the ſeveral texts of ſcripture concerning this matter.

With relation to this covenant and agreement between him and his Father, he prays, John xvii. 1, 2. that he would not be unmindful of the glory which he had promiſed to inveſt him withal. " Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son ; as thou " haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould " give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given " him." And ver. 4, 5. " I have glorified thee " on the earth : I have finiſhed the work which " thou gaveſt me to do." And then he claims the reward of it. " And now, O Father, glorify thou " me with thine own ſelf." And the apoſtle to the Hebrews, chap. xii. 2. tells us, that the hopes of this did encourage, and bear up our Lord under his ſufferings, " who for the joy that was ſet before " him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and " is ſet down at the right-hand of the throne of " God." And St. Peter tells us, 1 Pet. i. 11. that " the prophets of old teſtified before-hand the " ſufferings of Christ, and the glory that ſhould " follow." And St. Paul tells us what this glory is, " Eph. i. 20, 21. viz. that " God hath ſet " him at his own right-hand in heavenly places, far " above all principality, and power, and might, and " dominion, and every name that is named, not " only in this world, but in that which is to come" But moſt expreſly, Phil. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. the ſame apoſtle tells us, that in conſideration of the great humiliation and ſufferings of Christ, " God " hath highly exalted him. He made himſelf of " no reputation, (he emptied himſelf) and took " upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made

" in the likeneſs of men. And being found in fa-
" ſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became
" obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.
" Wherefore GOD alſo hath highly exalted him,
" and given him a name, which is above every
" name: that at the name of JESUS every knee
" ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in
" earth, and things under the earth: and that every
" tongue ſhould confeſs that JESUS CHRIST is
" LORD, to the glory of GOD the Father" And that the giving of this name and authority to CHRIST, upon account whereof all creatures ſhould be ſubject to him, doth principally import that power of judging the world which was committed to him, is evident from the explication of theſe phraſes, of "bow-
" ing the knee to CHRIST, and of confeſſing to
" him with the tongue," which the ſame apoſtle tells us elſewhere do ſignify our being judged by him. Rom. xiv. 10, 11. " We ſhall all ſtand be-
" fore the judgment-ſeat of CHRIST: for it is writ-
" ten, As I live, ſaith the LORD, every knee ſhall
" bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to GOD.
" So then every one of us ſhall give an account of
" himſelf to GOD."

So that you ſee that the glorious reward of CHRIST's ſelf-denial and ſuffering, doth principally conſiſt in having the judgment of the world committed to him, which therefore is called " his king-
" dom. Matth. xvi. 28. where our SAVIOUR expreſſeth it by " the Son of man's coming in his
" kingdom. 2 Tim. iv. 1. " I charge thee there-
" fore," ſaith St. Paul to Timothy, " before GOD
" and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who ſhall judge
" the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his
" kingdom." And it is with relation to this pow-

er

SERM. CLXXIX.

er and authority, that the title of king is given to him, Matth. xxv. 34. "Then ſhall the king ſay "unto them on his right-hand, &c." And the ſcripture almoſt every where, when it ſpeaks of CHRIST's coming, calls it his "glorious appearance." Matth. xvi. 27. "They ſhall ſee the Son of man "coming in the glory of his Father. Mat. xxiv. 30. "They ſhall ſee the Son of man coming with power "and great glory." Mat. xxv. 31. "When the "Son of man ſhall come in his glory." And Tit. "ii. 13. it is called, "the glorious appearance of the "great GOD, and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST."

And this is a very ſuitable reward of his great ſubmiſſion and ſufferings, that he who lived in ſo mean and obſcure a condition, ſhould come in great glory; that he who was rejected and deſpiſed of men, ſhould be attended on by mighty angels; that he who was arraigned and condemned by the powers of the world, ſhould have authority given him to ſummon all, both ſmall and great, the kings and great men, and judges of the earth, to appear at his bar, and to receive ſentence at his mouth.

And this ſhall be the laſt act of his mediatorſhip, to ſit in judgment upon the world, to diſtribute rewards to his faithful ſervants, and to puniſh his obſtinate and implacable enemies. And when this work is finiſhed, then this authority ſhall expire, and the office and kingdom of the mediator ſhall ceaſe; for "when he ſhall have ſubdued all things to himſelf," as the apoſtle expreſly tells us, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, &c. "then cometh the end, when he ſhall have de-"livered up the kingdom to GOD, even the Father, "when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all au-"thority, and power. For he muſt reign, till he hath "put all enemies under his feet. And when all things

"ſhall

" ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo " himſelf be ſubject unto him that hath put all things " under him, that GOD may be all in all." SERM. CLXXIX.

2. GOD hath committed the adminiſtration of this judgment to CHRIST, that he might hereby declare the righteouſneſs and equity of it, in that mankind is judged by one in their own nature, a man like themſelves. And therefore we find that the ſcripture, when it ſpeaks of CHRIST as judge of the world, doth almoſt conſtantly call him man, and " the Son of man." In the places I have mentioned before, Matth. xiii. 41. " The Son of man ſhall " ſend forth his angels." And Matth. xvi. 27. " The Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his " Father." Matth. xxiv. 30. " Then ſhall appear " the ſign of the Son of man in heaven, and they " ſhall ſee the Son of man coming in the clouds of " heaven, with power and great glory." Matth. xxv. 31. " When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory." Acts xvii. 31. " He hath appointed a day, in which " he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that " man whom he hath ordained." By the conſtant uſe of which expreſſion, the ſcripture doth give us plainly to underſtand, that this great honour of being judge of the world was conferred upon the human nature of CHRIST. For as he is GOD, he is over all, and judge of the world, and could not derive this power from any, it being originally inherent in the Deity. Which likewiſe appears in thoſe expreſſions of his being ordained a judge, and having " all " authority and judgment committed and given to " him." Acts xvii. 31. " He will judge the " world in righteouſneſs by that man, whom he " hath ordained." And John v. 22. " The Fa- " ther hath committed all judgment to the Son."

SERM. CLXXIX.

And ver. 27. "He hath given him authority to "execute judgment." Now this cannot be said of CHRIST as GOD, but in respect of his human nature. And this is clear beyond all exception, by what our SAVIOUR adds, as a reason why this authority is committed to him; "he hath given him "authority to execute judgment, because he is the "Son of man;" that is, because in that respect, and no other, he is capable of having this authority derived to him; for as he is the Son of GOD, he hath it in himself. And perhaps for this reason likewise, because in respect of his human nature, he is visible; and man being part of the visible creation of GOD, and the judgment of the great day being to be administered in a visible manner, and to that end the bodies of men to be raised and united to their souls, in order to their visible appearance at this judgment; it seems very congruous, that the Son of man, clothed in our nature and invested with a human body, should sit in judgment upon mankind.

But principally because nothing can more effectually declare the equity of this judgment, and that it shall be administered in righteousness, than that GOD hath ordained a man like ourselves to sit in judgment upon us. In human judgments, it is reckoned a great piece of equity, for men to be tried by their peers, to be acquitted or condemned by those, who are as near as may be to them, and in the same circumstances of rank and condition with themselves; because such are like to understand their case best, and to have a fair and equitable consideration of all the circumstances belonging to it. Now CHRIST, as he is "the Son of man," is near to us, "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, made "in all things like unto us, only without sin;" which

which was neceſſary to qualify him to be our judge; he dwelt among us, and underſtands all our circumſtances, and whatever may have influence upon our caſe, to extenuate or aggravate our guilt. What the apoſtle to the Hebrews ſays of CHRIST as an high-prieſt, may be applied to him as a judge, Heb. iv. 15. "We have not a judge, which cannot be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin."

That which now remains, is to draw ſome inferences from what I have diſcourſed to you upon this argument.

1. If the LORD JESUS CHRIST ſhall judge the world, and we muſt "all appear before his judg-"ment-ſeat," then it greatly concerns every one of us ſo to demean ourſelves in this world, that we may be accepted of him in the next. If a man be to be tried for his life, how will he court the favour of the judge, that when he comes to ſtand at his bar, he may receive a gracious ſentence from his mouth? Why there is a day certainly coming, when every one of us muſt appear before the tribunal of the great judge of the world; and therefore we ſhould with all poſſible care and diligence endeavour to approve our conſciences, and all the actions of our lives to him. "Wherefore we labour," ſaith the apoſtle immediately before my text, "that whether preſent "or abſent, we may be accepted of him. For we "muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of "CHRIST." This is that which makes his acceptance and approbation ſo valuable and conſiderable, that he is to be our judge, to him we muſt ſtand or fall, by his ſentence we ſhall be caſt or cleared for ever.

We are very apt to court the favour of great men, of the princes and judges of this world, that when we come to ſtand in need of it, we may have the benefit and comfort of it. But this is not our great intereſt; for the ſentence that men can paſs upon us, doth but operate for a little while, the effect and conſequences of it do not reach beyond this world, it is not final and concluſive as to our eternal ſtate. To allude to that ſaying of Solomon's, "many ſeek the "prince's favour: but every man's judgment is of "the LORD." We ſeek the favour of the great men of this world: but there is a greater man than any of theſe, whom we are apt to deſpiſe and neglect, "the prince of the kings of the earth, the "man who is ordained of GOD, to be judge both "of quick and dead." Every man's judgment ſhall be from him, it is his ſentence which above all other we have moſt reaſon to deſire or dread. Therefore we ſhould have regard to him, and by ſubmitting to his ſcepter, and yielding a willing obedience to the laws of his holy goſpel, ſeek his favour, leſt "he "break us with a rod of iron, and daſh us in pieces "like a potter's veſſel." This advice we find given "to the kings and rulers of the earth," Pſal. ii. 10, 11, 12. "Be wiſe now therefore, O ye kings; "and be inſtructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve "the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. "Kiſs the Son leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from "the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: "bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him."

2. This is matter of great comfort to all ſincere Chriſtians, that CHRIST ſhall judge the world; as it likewiſe is of great terror to all that diſobey the goſpel, and by their wicked lives confute their profeſſion, and pretended belief of it. CHRIST is

" the author of eternal ſalvation to them that obey " him," and to none elſe. He hath not only purchaſed this ſalvation for us, but by a publick, and ſolemn, and authoritative ſentence, will confer it upon us.

Indeed it is juſtly matter of great terror to the wicked of the world, who live in ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and under the name and title of Chriſtians, have " trampled under foot the Son of GOD" and by their lives have openly declared, that " they " would not have this man rule over them." Sure it cannot but be matter of great horror and amazement to ſuch perſons, to think of this judge, and to conſider, that he, whom by their lewd lives and practices they have ſo contemned in this world, will ſit as judge upon them, and condemn them in the next. And therefore our SAVIOUR tells us, Luke xxi. 25, &c. that when the day of judgment ſhall ſurprize the world, and " they ſhall ſee the Son of man " coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and " great glory ;" then the wicked of the earth ſhall be in great diſtreſs and perplexity, and " their hearts " ſhall fail them for fear, and for looking after thoſe " things which are coming upon the earth :" but that to good men it ſhall be a day of great joy, and that the approach of it ſhall revive their ſpirits, and raiſe their heads, ver. 28. " But when theſe things " ſhall begin to come to paſs, then lift up your heads " with joy, becauſe your redemption draws nigh."

And this conſideration is matter of great comfort to all good men, both upon account of their ſufferings and ſervices for CHRIST. In reſpect of their ſufferings for him. In this world they are expoſed to great trials and perſecutions for him : but he, for whoſe name we ſuffer, is to give us our reward ; he,

who

SERM. CLXXIX.

who is of the same nature with us, and "took part "of flesh and blood," and suffered himself "in the "flesh," more grievously than any of us can suffer; he it is, to whom GOD hath referred it, to consider our sufferings, and give what rewards to them he thinks fit. And then in respect of our services. Though the best of them be imperfect, and nothing that we do is able to abide the severity of his justice, yet by virtue of his meritorious sacrifice and satisfaction, the imperfection of them is pardoned, and the sincerity of them is accepted. For he being our judge, who was our sacrifice, and is our "advocate "with the Father," we may rest assured, that he will plead our cause for us, and the merit of his own sufferings, in bar of that sentence which strict justice would pass upon us.

3. And lastly, this shews what reason the ministers of CHRIST have, to be earnest and importunate with sinners, to repent and turn to GOD, to believe and obey the gospel of CHRIST, that they may have him their friend, who will certainly be their judge. This inference the apostle makes from this doctrine, in the words immediately after the text. "Know- "ing therefore the terror of the LORD, we per- "suade men;" we who are employed by CHRIST, to warn sinners of the danger and terror of a future judgment, who are ambassadors sent from this great king and judge of the world, to treat with sinners, and to offer peace to them, and "in CHRIST's "stead to beseech them to be reconciled to GOD," as the apostle speaks in the latter part of this chapter. So that if we ourselves believe what we preach to others, to be the word and law of him who shall shortly judge us, and them that hear us, can we forbear with all possible importunity to solicit their repentance,

pentance, and to warn them "to flee from the wrath "which is to come?" Can we let them ſleep in their ſins, when we ſee them neglect ſo great a happineſs, and run themſelves upon ſo intolerable a miſery? If we believe that holy book out of which we preach, and the diſcoveries and revelation there made, we may take an eaſy proſpect of another world, and ſee "the "wrath of GOD revealed from heaven, againſt all "ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men." For the goſpel hath made a more particular and clear diſcovery to us of the ſtate of the next world, and the proceedings of the great day, than ever the world was acquainted with before. It tells us who is the perſon that ſhall ſit in judgment upon us, even "JESUS CHRIST, whereof GOD hath given aſſurance "unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the "dead." Now if we know this, and be aſſured of it, we cannot but deal plainly with ſinners, and out of tender pity and compaſſion to them, endeavour to make them ſenſible of the ſad iſſue and event of a wicked life, and that without repentance and amendment they will not be able to ſtand in the judgment of the great day. When we ſee men in the high-way to ruin and deſtruction, and the evil day making haſte towards them, we cannot but warn them of that ſad fate which hangs over them, and endeavour by all means to reſcue them from that extreme and endleſs miſery, which is ready to overtake them.

Conſider then, ſinner, whom it is thou now rejecteſt and deſpiſeſt, and whoſe laws thou caſteſt behind thy back. It is he, who for all his mean appearance in the world, is "the LORD of glory," into whoſe hand "the Father hath committed all judgment." And can there be a greater madneſs, than to provoke and make him thine enemy, who ſhall be thy judge?

than

SERM. CLXXIX.

than to deſpiſe him, who can deſtroy thee? He appeared once as "a lamb to take away the ſins of the "world:" but if through our obſtinacy and impenitency we render this appearance of his ineffectual for our recovery, he will appear a ſecond time in a more terrible manner, as "a lion to tear us in "pieces." He came once as "a light into the world," in a ſtill and gentle way, to convince and convert ſinners: but if we reſiſt this light, he will come "in flaming fire to take vengeance on all them that "know not God, and obey not the goſpel of his "Son."

And this is that which will make us ſpeechleſs, and fill our faces with everlaſting confuſion, at the ſecond coming of Christ, that we have fruſtrated and made void the end of his firſt coming. What ſhall we be able to ſay to him, when he comes to judge us, who rejected him, when he came to ſave us? With what reaſon can we hope that he will deliver us from hell, when we would not be ſaved by him "from our ſins, "and redeemed from our vain converſation?"

I will conclude all with that merciful warning which the judge himſelf hath given us, and left upon record, Luke xxi. 34, 35, 36. "Take heed "to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be over-"charged with ſurfeiting, and drunkenneſs, and "cares of this life, and ſo that day come upon you "unawares. For as a ſnare ſhall it come on all them "that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch "ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be ac-"counted worthy to eſcape all theſe things that ſhall "come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of man."

The 9 pages next ensuing are wrong. SER-

30, 31. is that which doth, as it were, make repentance to be a new doctrine that did come with the goſpel into the world, becauſe it was never before enforced with this powerful argument; "the times "of that ignorance GOD winked at; but now he "calls upon all men every where to repent; be- "cauſe, &c." When the world was in ignorance, and had not ſuch aſſurance of a future ſtate, of eternal rewards and puniſhments after this life, the arguments to repentance were weak and feeble in compariſon of what they now are, the neceſſity of this duty was not ſo evident. But now GOD hath aſſured us of a future judgment, now exhortations to repentance have a commanding power and influence upon men; ſo that repentance, both as it is that which is very much preſſed and inculcated in the goſpel, and as it hath it's chief motives and enforcements from the goſpel, may be ſaid to be one of the great doctrines of the goſpel.

Query 2. Whether the preaching of faith in CHRIST, among thoſe who are already Chriſtians, be at all neceſſary? Becauſe it ſeems very improper, to preſs thoſe to believe in CHRIST, who are already perſuaded that he is the Meſſias, and do entertain the hiſtory and doctrine of the goſpel.

Anſ. The faith which the apoſtle here means, and which he would perſuade men to, is an effectual belief of the goſpel; ſuch a faith as hath real effects upon men, and makes them to live as they believe; ſuch a faith as perſuades them of the need of theſe bleſſings that the goſpel offers, and makes them to deſire to be partakers of them, and in order thereto to be willing to ſubmit to thoſe terms and conditions of holineſs and obedience, which the goſpel requires. This is the faith we would perſuade men to, and

SERM. CLIX.

there is nothing more neceſſary to be preſſed upon the greateſt part of Chriſtians than this; for how few are there, among thoſe who profeſs to believe the goſpel, who believe it in this effectual manner, ſo as to conform themſelves to it? The faith which moſt Chriſtians pretend to is merely negative; they do not diſbelieve the goſpel, they do not conſider it, nor trouble themſelves about it, they do not care, nor are concerned whether it be true or not; but they have not a poſitive belief of it, they are not poſſeſſed with a firm perſuaſion of the truth of thoſe matters which are contained in it; if they were, ſuch a perſuaſion would produce real and poſitive effects. Every man naturally deſires happineſs, and it is impoſſible that any man that is poſſeſſed with this belief, that in order to happineſs it is neceſſary for him to do ſuch and ſuch things; and that if he omit or neglect them he is unavoidably miſerable, that he ſhould not do them. Men ſay they believe this or that, but you may ſee in their lives, what it is they believe. So that the preaching of this faith in CHRIST, which is the only true faith, is ſtill neceſſary.

I. Infer. "If repentance towards GOD, and faith in "the LORD JESUS CHRIST," be the ſum and ſubſtance of the goſpel, then from hence we may infer the excellency of the chriſtian religion, which inſiſts only upon thoſe things that do tend to our perfection and our happineſs. Repentance tends to our recovery, and the bringing of us back as near as may be to innocence. *Primus innocentiæ gradus eſt non peccaſſe*; *ſecundus*, *pœnitentia*: and then "faith in the LORD "JESUS CHRIST," though it be very comprehenſive, and contains many things in it, yet nothing but what is eminently for our advantage, and doth very much conduce to our happineſs. The hiſtorical part

of

of the goſpel acquaints us with the perſon and actions of our SAVIOUR, which conduceth very much to our underſtanding of the author and means of our ſalvation. The doctrinal part of the goſpel contains what GOD requires on our part, and the encouragements and arguments to our duty, from the conſideration of the recompence and rewards of the next life. The precepts of CHRIST's doctrine are ſuch as tend exceedingly to the perfection of our nature, being all founded in reaſon, in the nature of GOD, and of a reaſonable creature; I except only thoſe poſitive inſtitutions of the chriſtian religion, the two ſacraments, which are not burthenſom, and are of excellent uſe. This is the firſt.

II. We may learn from hence what is to be the ſum and end of our preaching, to bring men to repentance and a firm belief of the goſpel; but then it is to be conſidered, that we preach repentance, ſo often as we preach either againſt ſin in general, or any particular ſin or vice; and ſo often as we perſuade to holineſs in general, or to the performance of any particular duty of religion, or to the exerciſe of any particular grace; for repentance includes the forſaking of ſin, and a ſincere reſolution and endeavour of reformation and obedience. And we preach repentance ſo often as we inſiſt upon ſuch conſiderations and arguments, as may be powerful to deter men from ſin, and to engage them to holineſs. And we preach "faith towards our LORD JESUS CHRIST," ſo often as we declare the grounds of the chriſtian religion, and inſiſt upon ſuch arguments as tend to make it credible, and are proper to convince men of the truth and reaſonableneſs of it; ſo often as we explain the myſtery of CHRIST's incarnation, the hiſtory of his life, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and

SERM. CLIX.

interceſſion, and the proper ends and uſe of theſe; ſo often as we open the method of GOD's grace for the ſalvation of ſinners, the nature of the covenant between GOD and us, and the conditions of it, and the way how a ſinner is juſtified and hath his ſins pardoned, the nature and neceſſity of regeneration and ſanctification; ſo often as we explain the precepts of the goſpel, and the promiſes and threatenings of it, and endeavour to convince men of the equity of CHRIT's commands, and to aſſure them of the certainty of the eternal happineſs which the goſpel promiſes to them that obey it, and of the eternal miſery which the goſpel threatens to thoſe that are diſobedient; all this is preaching "faith in our LORD "JESUS CHRIST."

III. This may correct the irregular humours and itch in many people, who are not contented with this plain and wholeſom food, but muſt be gratified with ſublime notions and unintelligible myſteries, with pleaſant paſſages of wit, and artificial ſtrains of rhetorick, with nice and unprofitable diſputes, with bold interpretations of dark prophecies, and peremptory determinations of what will happen next year, and a punctual ſtating of the time when Anti-chriſt ſhall be thrown down, and Babylon ſhall fall, and who ſhall be employed in this work. Or if their humour lies another way, you muſt apply yourſelf to it, by making ſharp reflections upon matters in preſent controverſy and debate, you muſt dip your ſtile in gall and vinegar, and be all ſatyr and invective againſt thoſe that differ from you, and teach people to hate one another, and to fall together by the ears; and this men call goſpel preaching, and ſpeaking of ſeaſonable truths.

Surely St. Paul was a goſpel preacher, and ſuch an

an one as may be a pattern to all others; and yet he did none of theſe; he preached what men might underſtand, and what they ought to believe and practiſe, in a plain and unaffected and convincing manner; he taught "ſuch things as made for peace," "and whereby he might edify and build up men in "their holy faith." The doctrines that he preached will never be unſeaſonable, that men ſhould leave their ſins, and believe the goſpel, and live accordingly. SERM. CLIX.

And if men muſt needs be gratified with diſputes and controverſies, there are theſe great controverſies between GOD and the ſinner to be ſtated and determined; whether this be religion, to follow our own luſts and inclinations, or to endeavour to be like GOD, and to be conformed to him, in goodneſs, and mercy, and righteouſneſs, and truth, and faithfulneſs? Whether JESUS CHRIST be not the Meſſias and SAVIOUR of the world? Whether faith and repentance and ſincere obedience be not the terms of ſalvation, and the neceſſary conditions of happineſs? Whether there ſhall be a future judgment, when all men ſhall be ſentenced according to their works? Whether there be heaven and hell? Whether good men ſhall be eternally and unſpeakably happy, and wicked men extremely and everlaſtingly miſerable? Theſe are the great controverſies of religion, upon which we are to diſpute on GOD's behalf againſt ſinners. GOD aſſerts, and ſinners deny theſe things, not in words, but which is more emphatical and ſignificant, in their lives and actions. Theſe are practical controverſies of faith, and it concerns every man to be reſolved and determined about them, that he may frame his life accordingly.

And ſo for repentance; GOD ſays, repentance is a forſaking of ſin, and a thorough change and amend-

ment

SERM. CLIX.

ment of life; the ſinner ſays, that it is only a formal confeſſion, and a ſlight aſking of GOD forgiveneſs: GOD calls upon us ſpeedily and forthwith to repent; the ſinner ſaith it is time enough, and it may ſafely be deferred to ſickneſs or death; theſe are important controverſies, and matters of moment. But men do not affect common truths; whereas theſe are moſt neceſſary: And indeed whatever is generally uſeful and beneficial, ought to be common, and not to be the leſs valued, but the more eſteemed for being ſo.

And as theſe doctrines of faith and repentance are never unſeaſonable, ſo are they more peculiarly proper when we celebrate the holy ſacrament, which was inſtituted for a ſolemn and ſtanding memorial of the chriſtian religion, and is one of the moſt powerful arguments and perſuaſives to repentance and a good life.

The faith of the goſpel doth more particularly reſpect the death of CHRIST; and therefore it is called "faith in his blood," becauſe that is more eſpecially the object of our faith; the blood of CHRIST, as it was a ſeal of the truth of his doctrine, ſo it is alſo a confirmation of all the bleſſings and benefits of the new covenant.

And it is one of the greateſt arguments in the world to repentance. In the blood of CHRIST we may ſee our own guilt, and in the dreadful ſufferings of the Son of GOD, the juſt deſert of our ſins; "he "hath born our griefs, and carried our ſorrows, he "was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed "for our iniquities; therefore the commemoration of his ſufferings ſhould call our ſins to remembrance, the repreſentation of his body broken, ſhould melt our hearts; and ſo often as we remember that "his

"blood

" blood was ſhed for us, our eyes" ſhould " run " down with rivers of tears;" ſo often as we " look " upon him whom we have pierced," we ſhould " mourn over him." When the ſon of GOD ſuffered, " the rocks were rent in ſunder;" and ſhall not the conſideration of thoſe ſufferings be effectual to break the moſt ſtony and obdurate heart?

What can be more proper when we come to this ſacrament, than the renewing of our repentance? When we partake of this paſſover, we ſhould " eat " it with bitter herbs." The moſt ſolemn expreſſions of our repentance fall ſhort of thoſe ſufferings, which our bleſſed SAVIOUR underwent for our ſins. If " our head were waters, and our eyes fountains " of tears," we could never ſufficiently lament the curſed effects and conſequences of thoſe provocations which were ſo fatal to the Son of GOD.

And that our repentance may be real, it muſt be accompanied with the reſolution of a better life; for if we return to our ſins again, " we trample under " foot the Son of GOD, and profane the blood of " the covenant," and out of " the cup of ſalvation " we drink our own damnation," and turn that which ſhould ſave us into an inſtrument and ſeal of our own ruin.

SER-

SERMON CLX.

Of confeſſing and forſaking ſin, in order to pardon.

PROV. xxviii. 13.

He that covereth his ſins ſhall not proſper: but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy.

SERM. CLX. Preached in Aſh-Wedneſday.

SINCE we are all ſinners, and liable to the juſtice of GOD, it is a matter of great moment to our comfort and happineſs, to be rightly informed by what means, and upon what terms, we may be reconciled to GOD, and find mercy with him. And to this purpoſe the text gives us this advice and direction, "whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſins "ſhall have mercy."

In which words there is a great bleſſing and benefit declared and promiſed to ſinners, upon certain conditions. The bleſſing and benefit promiſed, is "the mercy and favour of GOD," which comprehends all the happy effects of GOD's mercy and goodneſs to ſinners. And the conditions upon which this bleſſing is promiſed are two, "confeſſion of our ſins, "and forſaking of them;" and theſe two contain in them the whole nature of that great and neceſſary duty of repentance, without which a ſinner can have no reaſonable hopes of the mercy of GOD.

I. Here is a bleſſing or benefit promiſed, which is "the mercy and favour of GOD." And this in the full extent of it, comprehends all the effects of the mercy and goodneſs of GOD to ſinners, and doth primarily import the pardon and forgiveneſs of our ſins.

And

men, thou ſhall not eſcape the judgment of GOD. It may be thou art a prince, and beareſt rule over others: but thou alſo art liable to the judgment of GOD, and therefore oughteſt to remember, that "they that rule over men, muſt be juſt, ruling in the "fear of GOD," and of that great account which they muſt one day give of that high charge committed to them. It may be now thou judgeſt others, and canſt call them before thy bar, and make them tremble, having power and authority to abſolve or condemn them: but remember, that for all this thou muſt come into judgment thyſelf, and give an account how thou haſt judged others, and whether thou haſt ſat and proceeded in theſe inferior courts, as one mindful of the high tribunal of GOD, and with a juſt ſenſe of the judgment of the great day, when all the cauſes which thou haſt tried here upon earth, will be reviewed and ſeverely ſcanned in that higher court, from which there can be no appeal.

It may be thou art rich and powerful, and one of thoſe great flies that can break through the cobwebs of human laws, and eſcape the judgment of them: but the judgment of GOD will take faſt hold of thee, and in deſpite of all thy intereſt, and might, will take a ſevere revenge upon thee. As powerful as thou art, thou art but a man, and GOD is infinitely too ſtrong for thee, thou canſt not eſcape out of his hands. "Thinkeſt thou, O man! that thou ſhalt "eſcape the judgment of GOD?" ſays the apoſtle; looking upon it as a fooliſh and abſurd imagination, for any man to think, that he can by any means avoid the judgment of GOD.

So that ſo long as we are men, whatever elſe we are, we ought to ſtand in awe of the judgment of the great day; becauſe, let our rank and condition

SERM. CLXXX.

be what it will, we are all equally obnoxious to that, and can upon no account whatsoever plead any privilege and exemption from it.

II. The consideration of this confounds all those differences and distinctions of men, which make such a noise in this world, and whatever they may signify in this world, makes them very inconsiderable as to the other. Why then should men be puft up, and look so big upon account of any of these things, when there is a day not far off, and which will certainly, and for ought we know, shortly overtake us, which will level men in all these respects, and set them upon even ground, before an impartial bar; where none of these things will be had in any consideration, and where the foolish pride and arrogance of men shall be confounded, and those who were wont to look down with so much scorn upon others, as so infinitely below them, shall find themselves upon an equal level with the poorest and most abject part of mankind, and shall be ready to say with the wise man, in the wisdom of Solomon, chap. v. 8. "What hath pride profited us, or what hath "riches with our vaunting brought us? All these "things are passed away as a shadow, and as a post "that hasteth by." So that we ought to use well all those advantages which we have above others in this world: if we do not, they will be of no use and benefit to us in the other. "Riches profit not "in the day of wrath."

All these petty civil differences and discriminations of high and low, rich and poor, honourable and base, they only hold in this world, and are in vogue on this side the grave: but when we come into the other world, they will all cease and signify nothing. There the powerful oppressor can do nothing to the injury

injury of the poorest man that ever lived in this world, and as little to his own safety and security. All that power and interest which is now so considerable, and makes it's way every where, and does what it pleaseth, will be of no use and significancy in the other world. The great and the mighty, when death hath once arrested them, and bound them over to the judgment of the great day, their glory and strength departs from them, and they are then but like other men. Job elegantly describes the state of men after death, Job iii. 17, 18, 19. "There the "wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary "be at rest. There the prisoners rest together, they "hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small "and the great are there, and the servant is free "from his master." While we are upon the stage of this world, we sustain several persons; one is a prince and a great man, another is a captain and a mighty man; and whilst this life lasts, these differences are considerable: but when we retire and go off the stage, we shall then be undrest, we shall be strip'd of all our titles, and of all our glory, and go out of the world as naked as we came into it. Death and judgment level all mankind, and when we come to appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, we shall all stand upon equal terms. For GOD respects not the persons of the mighty in judgment, he will shew no reverence to the great ones of this world, but will deal impartially and alike with all. Matth. xxv. 32. You may there see how the judge himself represents the universality and impartiality of his dealings with men in that day. "Be-"fore him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall "separate them one from another, as a shepherd "divideth his sheep from the goats." All man-

SERM. CLXXX.

kind ſhall then be gathered into one common flock, among which there ſhall no other diſtinction be made, but of ſheep and goats; the ſeparation which ſhall then be made, ſhall not be of the high from the low, of the rich from the poor, of the honourable from the baſe, of the learned from the ignorant; there ſhall be but one diſtinction then made, of the good from the bad, and the righteous from the wicked; there ſhall no conſideration be then had, but only of the moral differences of men; all civil difference will then vaniſh and be of no account in that day, either to exempt any man from that judgment, or to gain any favour and reſpect to him in the hearing or deciſion of his cauſe. This ſhould make all men very modeſt and humble in this world, to conſider how they ſhall be levelled in the next.

III. How ſhould the conſideration of this daſh all our ſenſual mirth and jollity, and put a damp upon our ſpirits, when they are too light and vainly tranſported with the pleaſures and delights of this world! If a man be to prepare himſelf to be tried for his life after a few days, how will he look about him, with what care and ſerioufneſs will he provide for ſo ſolemn an occaſion, and neglect nothing that may ſtand him in ſtead, and help to bring him off when he ſhall receive his trial! The thoughts of this will ſpoil all his mirth, and turn the lightneſs of his ſpirit into ſober ſadneſs. Much more ought the conſideration of a judgment infinitely more terrible, and in the conſequence of it of far greater concernment to us, to compoſe our minds into a ſerious frame. For if we believe a future and general judgment, and that none of us can by any means poſſibly eſcape it, then certainly it highly concerns every one of us to be ſerious, and to paſs the time of his life in a perpetual

perpetual awe of it. So that St. Peter argues from this consideration, 1 Pet. i. 17. "And if ye call "on the Father, who without respect of persons "judgeth every man, pass the time of your sojourn- "ing here in fear." This thought should interpose itself in all our mirth," that "we must appear be- "fore the judgment-seat of CHRIST." And there- fore Solomon admonisheth young men, in the midst of their sports and pleasures, to think of a future account, Eccles. xi. 9. "Rejoice, O young man, "in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the "days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy "heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know "that for all these things GOD will bring thee into "judgment."

IV. And lastly, from hence we learn, that the business of religion does equally concern every man. For if we must all be judged, we are all concerned to prepare and provide for it; and a religious and virtuous life is the only preparation for it. How should we order our lives with a respect to this great and general assize, when every one of us shall be brought upon his trial, and stand at the bar of GOD to be judged by him? Many live as if they thought the business of religion below them, and not at all appertaining to them: but if the judgment of GOD will equally reach all persons, then I am sure it e- qually concerns all to mind religion, and a holy and virtuous life; for that alone will make us worthy, as our SAVIOUR himself expresseth it, "to escape "all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand "before the Son of man."

And this is the result of Solomon's enquiry, and of his long discourse upon that argument, what is the great work and business, the great interest and con-

SERM. CLXXX.

concernment of men in this life; which we find in the conclusion of his sermon, called the book of the preacher, Eccles. xii. 13, 14. "Let us, says he, hear "the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear GOD, "and keep his commandments; for this is the "whole of man." Religion is the great business and concernment of men in this world, because "GOD will bring every man, and every work into "judgment, whether it be good or evil."

SERMON CLXXXI.

Of the actions for which men will be accountable.

2 COR. v. 10.

For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, *that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

SERM. CLXXXI.

The fourth sermon on this text.

I Proceed to the third proposition contained in these words, viz. That all the actions which men have done in this life shall then come to account, and men shall be judged for them. "That every man "may receive the things done in the body, τὰ ἴδια "τοῦ σώματος, the things proper and due to the "body;" so some very good copies have it: and then the meaning will be, that every one may receive the reward due to him; the word body, by a frequent Hebraism; being put for the person; as if he

SERM. CLXXXI.

he had said, " the reward due to himself," according to the actions he hath done in this life, good or bad : but in most copies it is, τὰ διὰ τῦ σώμα]Θ, " the things done in, or by the body," as our translation renders it, that every one may receive the reward of the actions which he hath done in this life ; and then this phrase doth import what it is that shall be the matter of our account at the day of judgment, viz. " The things done in the body," that is, all the actions of this life, while we are in this world, in this state of union of the soul and body.

Whether there be any peculiar emphasis in this phrase, τὰ διὰ τῦ σώμα]Θ, " the things done by, " or in the body," as if it did exclude those things which shall be done after death, in the state of separation of our souls from our bodies, from being accounted for at the resurrection in the day of judgment ; I say, whether there be any such emphasis in those words, " the things done in the body," I cannot certainly affirm, though according to the nature and reason of the thing it seems very probable, as the schoolmen have generally determined in this case, that *meritum est viatoris*, " merit and demerit are pro- " per to this state of trial ;" and that wicked men when they are in *termino*, and their state is finally concluded, and the trial of their obedience is at an end, do not demerit by their sins, nor increase their Punishment. For although that hatred and enmity of God which is in the damned spirits, be a monstrous irregularity in a creature, yet it cannot well in reason be otherwise, but that a creature which is extreamly miserable, and withal desperate, and past all hopes of remedy and recovery out of that dismal state ; I say, it cannot well in reason be otherwise expected, but that a creature in such a condition should rage

SERM. CLXXXI.

againſt the author of its torment and puniſhment, and do all the deſpite to him that he can, and wiſh that he were not, though it be in vain to wiſh ſo; and it ſeems probable that GOD will not bring this to a new account, becauſe it ſeems ſo natural and neceſſary a conſequent of a miſerable and deſperate ſtate: but though all this be probable, I am far from being peremptory in it, much leſs am I confident that it is the meaning of this phraſe here in the text, and I do not love to build an opinion upon a ſingle and doubtful phraſe of ſcripture. I only mention it by the by, not intending to inſiſt upon it, being much of his mind, who ſaid, *Non amo nimis argutam theologiam*, "I am no lover of great ſubtilty and nicety "in divinity."

It is ſufficient to my purpoſe, that this phraſe of "every man's receiving the things done in the body," does at leaſt import thus much, that we ſhall be accountable at the day of judgment, for all the actions that we have done in this life, and receive the due recompence and reward of them; which is the propoſition I intend as briefly as I can to illuſtrate and confirm.

And, firſt, for the illuſtration of this point, I ſhall inſtance in the ſeveral heads of action, as they take their difference and variety from the principle, or matter, or object, or other circumſtances of them. We muſt render an account to this great judge for our inward as well as outward actions; for the acts of our minds, and every thought ſpringing up there, eſpecially if it be cheriſhed and entertained by us; for all our ſecret deſigns, purpoſes and intentions, as well as for the words which we ſpeak, and the outward actions which we do: whatever we have thought and deſigned, ſpoken and declared, accompliſhed

SERM. CLXXXI.

pliſhed and done, will then be conſidered and examined, and we ſhall be judged for it. We muſt likewiſe give an account of all our civil as well as religious actions, of our behaviour toward men in all our dealing and intercourſe with them, as well as of our demeanour toward GOD in the duties of his more immediate worſhip and ſervice. The neglects and omiſſions of our duty in any kind will alſo come under conſideration, as well as our commiſſions of evil. A ſtrict account likewiſe will be exacted of all the talents which GOD hath entruſted us with, of all the abilities, opportunities and advantages we ever had of doing ſervice to GOD, and good to men, and whether we have made anſwerable improvements of them, for the glory of GOD and the benefit and advantage of men.

We muſt be accountable likewiſe for words and actions of leſs moment and conſequence, as well as for thoſe of greater weight and concernment; for thoſe which were done in ſecret, and in the greateſt darkneſs and privacy, as well as for thoſe which were done in publick, and in the open view and light of the world; for the good and evil which hath been done by ourſelves, and in our own perſons, and for what hath been done by others by our command and countenance, and from the influence of our counſel and perſuaſion, or example, or which we have been any ways acceſſary to hinder or promote; and laſtly, for the manner and circumſtances of our actions, as well as for the matter and ſubſtance of them; all theſe will be ſurveyed and ſtrictly ſearched into, and weighed in an exact balance, that we may receive a reward or puniſhment proportionable to them.

Secondly, for the confirmation of this, I ſhall make it evident both from ſcripture and reaſon.

8

SERM. LXXXI.

I. From ſcripture; which in general tells us, that "GOD will bring every work into judgment;" and that in order thereto, GOD ſtrictly obſerves and takes notice of what we do; that "his eyes are upon the "ways of man, and that he ſeeth all his goings; "that there is no darkneſs or ſhadow of death, "where the workers of iniquity may hide themſelves," Job xxxiv. 21, 22. That "the ways "of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he "pondereth all his goings, Prov. v. 21. That "he knoweth our paths, and our lying down, and "is acquainted with all our ways." That "there "is not a word in our tongue, but he knoweth it "altogether, and that he underſtands even our "thoughts afar off," Pſal. cxxxix. 2, 3, 4. That all the actions of men are recorded in books, which ſhall be "produced and opened at the great day, "and the dead, both ſmall and great, ſhall be judged "from thoſe things, which ſhall be written in thoſe "books, Rev. xx. 12."

And more particularly the ſcripture tells us, that thoſe words and actions of men which ſeem moſt inconſiderable, and are moſt likely to be exempted, ſhall be accounted for, and ſeverely ſcanned and weighed. Matt. xii. 36, 37. ſays our LORD there, "I ſay "unto you, that every idle word," by which if our SAVIOUR do not mean every unprofitable, to be ſure every "wicked word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall "give an account thereof in the day of judgment. "For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by "thy words thou ſhalt be condemned." By which ſaying, our SAVIOUR deſignedly confutes an opinion too current among many, that mens words ſignify little, and that no account will be taken of them at the day of judgment; that GOD will not be ſo ſevere

as to make them matter of charge and accuſation, and to puniſh us for them in the other world; and therefore to obviate this miſtake, he purpoſely adds, "for by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by "thy words thou ſhalt be condemned." And therefore men muſt not think, that all their lewd and filthy talk, all their raſh oaths and imprecations, all their atheiſtical diſcourſe, and profane jeſts upon religion and the holy ſcriptures, all their calumnies and ſlanders of good men, all their officious lies to ſerve a preſent turn and occaſion, will paſs for nothing at the judgment of the great day. No, the judge himſelf hath expreſly told us, that of all ſuch "words men "ſhall give an account in the day of judgment." And St. Jude tells us, out of an ancient prophecy of Enoch, that "the LORD ſhall come with ten thou-"ſands of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all, "and to convince all that are ungodly, not only of "all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly "committed, but likewiſe of all their hard ſpeeches "which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him."

Our moſt ſecret thoughts and actions alſo, as well as our open and publick deeds, ſhall then be brought upon the ſtage, Eccleſ. xii. 14. "For GOD will "bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret "thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Rom. ii. 16. "In the day, when GOD ſhall judge "the ſecrets of men by JESUS CHRIST, according to "my goſpel." And this likewiſe is the meaning of that proverbial ſpeech ſo often uſed by our SAVIOUR, "there is nothing covered, that ſhall not be re-"vealed; neither hid, that ſhall not be known." There is nothing ſo ſecret which ſhall not be diſcloſed and made manifeſt in that great day of revelation, and be laid open in the face of the whole world; eſpe-

cially the cunning, diſſimulation and hypocriſy of men with GOD and men. Men are apt to think themſelves ſafe enough, if they can but eſcape the eye of men, and commit their ſins ſecretly, and in the dark. But this is either direct atheiſm, or downright folly; becauſe the eye of GOD is continually upon us, and "the darkneſs hideth not from him, "but the night ſhineth as the day, the darkneſs and "the light are both alike to him." And if we be always under the inſpection of our judge, if all that we think, and ſay, and do, be "open and naked to "the eye of him, πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, to whom we "muſt give an account," what will it profit us to diſſemble before men, and to conceal any of our actions from them? Nay, if we could hide them from ourſelves (as we cannot our wilful and deliberate ſins) yet that would be of no advantage to us, becauſe GOD "is greater than our hearts, and knows all things."

And then likewiſe, we muſt be accountable to GOD for all the neglects and omiſſions of our duty, as well as for the poſitive commiſſion of ſin, and that in proportion to the advantages and opportunities we have had of doing more and greater good. So our SAVIOUR tells us, that "unto whomſoever much is "given, of him much ſhall be required," Luke xii. 48. Many are apt to think, that if they do but abſtain from notorious and ſcandalous vices, if they do no body harm, though they do not ſerve GOD ſo fervently and conſtantly as others do, though they ſeldom think of him and pray to him, though they have no manner of activity or concernment to do good, either to the bodies or ſouls of men, yet that this negative virtue will ſerve their turn at the day of judgment. But the matter is quite otherwiſe, as our SAVIOUR hath moſt expreſly declared. "A good

"tree,

SERM. CLXXXI.

" tree, ſaith he, will bring forth good fruit." And by the parable of the fooliſh virgins, who for want of " oil in their lamps" were ſhut out of the kingdom of GOD, he declares to us the dangerous ſtate of thoſe who ſlumber away their lives in a drowſy inactivity, and are not careful either to keep alive grace in their hearts, or to ſhew forth the light of good works in their converſation. And in the parable of the talents, Matt. xxv. he paſſeth a moſt ſevere ſentence upon that " ſlothful ſervant, who hid his lord's " talent in a napkin, and buried it in the earth," without making any manner of improvement of it; ver. 30. " Caſt ye the unprofitable ſervant into outer " darkneſs, there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of " teeth." And in the ſame chapter, where our SAVIOUR repreſents to us the proceedings of the great day, the charge there drawn up againſt them, conſiſts of ſins of omiſſion, and groſs neglects to do the good which they had the ability and opportunity to do, ver. 41, 42, 43, &c. " Depart from me, ye curſed, " into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his " angels. For I was hungry, and ye gave me no " meat; thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; a ſtran- " ger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloth- " ed me not; ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me " not." Not that ſins of commiſſion ſhall then be paſt by and left out of the account; it is taken for granted, that they ſhall be reckoned for in the firſt place: but the wiſdom of our SAVIOUR chuſeth to inſtance in thoſe ſins, which many hope they ſhall not be called to account for, the omiſſions and neglects of their duty, that he might hereby root out of the minds of men effectually that falſe opinion, which they are ſo apt to entertain concerning ſuch ſins, as if they were of a very light and venial nature.

II. This

SERM. CLXXXI.

II. This is evident likewiſe from reaſon; becauſe all the actions of reaſonable creatures, as ſuch, are under the regulation and government of law, by which, as by a rule, every thing that we do is to be meaſured. And we have all the reaſon that can be to expect, that he who gave us this law, will look to the obſervance of it, and take an account of all breaches and tranſgreſſions of it, ſo as to reward thoſe that keep it, and to puniſh the bold tranſgreſſors of it; and if this were not ſo, the law would want it's proper ſanction and enforcement, and had been given to no purpoſe.

And this law of God reacheth all our actions, inward and outward, religious and civil, ſecret and open, poſitive and negative, with all the circumſtances of commendation or aggravation that belong to them. And as this law is the rule of all human actions now, and by which we ought to live in this world; ſo it will be the rule by which we and all our actions ſhall be examined and judged in the next. The judgment of God will be of the ſame extent with his law.

And thus I have, as briefly as I could, illuſtrated and confirmed the truth of this propoſition, that all the actions which men have done in this life, ſhall come to account in the next, and they ſhall be judged for them.

And if ſo, then certainly no conſideration that can be preſented to the mind of man, ought in reaſon to be more powerful to beget in us a ſtrict care and conſcience of all our thoughts, words, and actions, than this, that after a little while, when a few days or years are over, all that we ever did in this world, ſhall be ſtrictly examined and looked into, and be approved or condemned by the impartial judgment of God. And therefore, if we have any grain of true wiſdom in us, any love

love to ourſelves, any ſenſe of our great and everlaſting intereſt, that great day of account ſhould always be before us, and preſent to our minds, and we ſhould govern every action of our lives with a ſerious and awful regard to it. And if we be conſcious to ourſelves that "there is any way of wickedneſs in us," that we have been groſly culpable in the violation of any known law of GOD, or in the neglect of any part of our duty, how can we without dread think of coming to ſo ſevere an account, and falling under ſo heavy a ſentence, as will then be pronounced upon the workers of iniquity?

Indeed, if we could do any thing now, of which we were to give no account hereafter, and which would not be taken into conſideration at the great day, we then might be ſecure and careleſs as to ſuch actions: But when nothing we do is exempted from the judgment of GOD, when we are aſſured beyond all doubt, that he will one day take cognizance of every thought, word, and action; how circumſpect ſhould we be, "what manner of perſons we are in "all holy converſation and godlineſs!" how nearly does it concern us, "to take heed to our ways, leſt "at any time we offend: to keepour hearts with all "diligence, and to ſet a watch to the door of our "lips!" that we may not think or ſpeak any thing in the ſight or hearing of our judge, by which we may incur his cenſure and condemnation. This is the conſideration which the wiſe man propoſeth to us, as of all other the moſt likely to awe men to the careful obedience and obſervance of GOD's laws. "Fear GOD, and keep his commandments: for GOD "will bring every work into judgment, and every "ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be "evil."

Can

SERM. CLXXXI.

Can we be negligent of our lives and actions, when we consider that all the passages of our lives are upon record, and that there is a most exact register kept of them, written in indelible characters with "a pen "of iron, and the point of a diamond?" as the expression is, Jer xvii. 1. "I remember all their wick-"edness, and their doings are before me," says God, Hos. vii. 2. And chap. viii. 7. "The Lord "hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely I "will not forget any of their works." We sin, and forget that we have sinned: but God chargeth himself with the remembrance of all our evil doings, and they can never slip out of his mind.

Did men seriously believe these things, and were they affected with them as they ought, they could not but have a wonderful effect upon their lives, to make us more watchful over our ways, and to tread every step of our lives more warily. We could not "commit iniquity with so much greediness and "pleasure, and rush into sin, as the horse rusheth "into battel," without any fear or consideration, were we verily persuaded, that every evil action that we do in this life, will be matter of charge and accusation in the day of judgment.

Therefore when we are doing any thing, we should ask ourselves, will not this also come into judgment? When we are engaged in any wicked design, or vicious course, we should consider, with what face will this act of violence and oppression, of fraud and cozenage, of filthy lewdness and brutish intemperance, appear at the great day? how will it look, when "God shall arise to judgment?" When we are careless and remiss, slight and superficial in the service of God, and the duties of his worship, we should remember that God takes notice of all this, and we must

must give an account to him for the manner, as well as the matter of our actions. SERM. CLXXXI.

If the actions of our lives were tranſient, and the conſequence of them were over ſo ſoon as they are done, and no memorial of them would remain hereafter; if they would die with us, and never riſe up in judgment againſt us; we needed not to take ſuch heed to them: But we do all things for eternity, and every action of this life will have a good or bad influence upon our everlaſting ſtate.

More particularly, the conſideration of this ſhould have an influence upon us, more eſpecially to theſe purpoſes.

1. To make us afraid of leſſer ſins, as well as greater, becauſe thoſe alſo, as well as theſe, will come into judgment; and we ſhould not eſteem any thing little, which GOD ſhall think fit to take into conſideration, and to bring upon the ſtage at the great day.

2. The conſideration of this ſhould likewiſe deter us from ſecret ſins. We are apt to think, that if we can but ſin in ſecret, and hide what we do from the eyes of men, we are ſecure and ſafe enough: but alas! our great danger is not from men, but GOD; not now, but hereafter. We are now very ſolicitous to conceal our wickedneſs, that we may avoid ſhame, and eſcape puniſhment from men: but GOD will one day produce all our ſecret ſins, and bring them forth into the light, for all our ſtudious concealment of them now. Now we are afraid of the eye of men, and therefore chuſe ſecrecy, that we may commit our ſins privately and unſeen. Vain man! The day is at hand, when all thy ſecret leudneſs and fraud will be brought upon the publick ſtage of the world, and be matter of publick infamy to thee, and an everlaſting reproach that can never be wiped off; and though

thou now "covereſt thy tranſgreſſion as Adam, "and hideſt thine iniquity in thy boſom," yet the time is coming, when all thy ſecret wickedneſs ſhall be expoſed to the view of angels and men; and then, ſinner, what wilt thou do, when thou ſhalt appear before this all-ſeeing Judge? None of thine arts of concealment will then ſtand thee in ſtead. Canſt thou hide thy ſins from his eye, ſo that he cannot ſearch them out? or thy ſelf from his wrath? If thou canſt not, what matters it to have any ſecret from others when all is known to thy Judge?

3. This ſhould likewiſe diſpoſe us to great ſincerity in all our words and actions, and make us always to ſpeak as we think, to perform what we promiſe and profeſs, and in all things to be what we would ſeem to be, ſince there is a day coming when "the "ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be diſcloſed," and every maſk of hypocriſy and diſſimulation ſhall be pluck'd off, and our moſt cloſe and cunning deſigns ſhall be brought into the open light. In that great day of revelation, nothing will be matter of comfort and rejoicing to us, but "the teſtimony of our conſciences, "that in all ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, we have "had our converſation in the world."

4. This ſhould make us faithfully to improve all the talents and opportunities which GOD affords to us, becauſe we are but ſtewards, and muſt give an account of them. We are apt to covet great wealth, and to aſpire after great places and power: but do we conſider what it is that we ſo eagerly deſire and purſue? All this will but bring upon us the burden of a greater and heavier account, if we do not improve theſe talents and advantages to the end for which they were given, to relieve the wants of the poor and miſerable, and to ſerve the great ends of religion and virtue;

virtue; and if we fail herein, a dreadful account will be exacted of us, and we shall wish that we had been the poorest and meanest, the most ignorant and unlearned persons in the world.

5. This should restrain us from uncharitable censures of others. "Thou art therefore inexcusable, O "man, whosoever thou art, that judgest another: "for thinkest thou, that thou shalt escape the judg- "ment of GOD?" as the apostle reasons, Rom. ii. 1.

6. This may help to support us under the unjust censures and reproaches of men. If we be innocent, GOD will one day "bring forth our righteousness as "the light, and our judgment as the noon-day." "With me, saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 3. it is a very "small thing that I should be judged of you, or of "man's judgment. He that judgeth me is the "LORD." It is desirable to approve ourselves and our actions to men: but if we cannot, it is a great satisfaction to approve them to our own consciences, and to GOD who is "greater than our hearts, and "knows all things."

Lastly, This will teach us not to measure our condition by the good opinion which others have of us; but by the law of GOD, which will be the standard and measure of our judgment. He will consider every thing exactly, and weigh all the circumstances of our case, and make all the allowances that equity requires. Men can but judge according to appearance; but the judgment of GOD will be according to truth: therefore we should above all "labour to be "accepted of him in that day."

SERMON CLXXXII.

Of the ſentence to be paſſed at the day of judgment.

2 COR. v. 10.

For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of CHRIST, *that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

SERM. CLXXXII. The fifth ſermon on this text.

I Proceed to the fourth and laſt propoſition contained in the text, viz. that at the day of judgment, ſentence ſhall be paſſed upon men according to the nature and quality of their actions done in this world, whether good or evil. The reward of happineſs or miſery which men ſhall be ſentenced to at that day, ſhall bear a proportion to the good or evil which they have done in this life.

In the proſecution of this argument, I ſhall enquire into theſe two things.

Firſt, What proportion the rewards of the next world ſhall bear to the actions of men in this life.

Secondly, The grounds and reaſons of it. And then make ſome application of this truth to the conſciences of men.

Firſt, What proportion the rewards of the next world ſhall bear to the actions of men in this life. I mean, whether the rewards of the next life ſhall only be proportioned to the kind and quality of our actions conſidered in general, as good or evil, that is, that good men ſhall be rewarded with everlaſting glory

glory and happineſs, and wicked men with eternal puniſhment and torment: or whether the degrees of theſe rewards ſhall likewiſe bear a proportion to the degrees of the good or evil of our actions, ſo that a more eminent degree of piety and holineſs, ſhall have a proportionable ſhare of glory and happineſs; and greater and more hainous ſins, ſhall be loaded with greater and heavier puniſhments.

I. It is clear, and out of all controverſy, that men ſhall be rewarded according to the quality and kind of their actions; good ſhall be rewarded to the good, and evil to the evil. And this is the conſtant tenor of the bible. Pſal. i. 6. "The LORD knoweth the "way of the righteous," that is, doth approve it, and will reward it: "but the way of the ungod-"ly ſhall periſh;" which is of the ſame importance with the expreſſion in the verſe before, "the wicked "ſhall not ſtand in the judgment." Iſa. iii. 10, 11. "Say ye to the righteous, it ſhall be well with them, "for they ſhall eat of the fruit of their doings. Wo "unto the wicked, for it ſhall be ill with him, for "the reward of his hands ſhall be given him;" which if it be meant of the rewards and puniſhments of this life, is much more conſtantly and univerſally true of the other. Matt. xvi. 27. "The Son of man "ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his an-"gels with him, and ſhall reward every man ac-"cording to his works." Rev. xxii. 12. "Behold "I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to "render to every man according as his work ſhall "be," that is, whether good or evil. Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of ſin is death: but the gift of GOD is "eternal life, that is, to thoſe who have their fruit "unto holineſs," as he had ſaid immediately before. Hither likewiſe belong thoſe innumerable texts, in which

SERM. CLXXXII.

which glory and happineſs and eternal life are promiſed to thoſe who live "ſoberly, righteouſly, and "godly in this preſent world;" and wickedneſs and diſobedience are threatened with dreadful and eternal puniſhment. But I ſhall only take notice of two or three of the moſt remarkable of them. Matt. xiii. 40, 41, 42. "The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels "and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things "that offend, and them which do iniquity, and ſhall "caſt them into a furnace of fire, there ſhall be "wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. Then ſhall the "righteous ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of "their Father." But this is moſt fully repreſented in that particular deſcription, which our LORD himſelf makes of the proceſs of that day, Matt. xxv. 34. where the ſentence that ſhall be paſt on the righteous is this, "Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the "kingdom prepared for you before the foundation "of the world." And on the wicked, ver. 41. "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, "prepared for the devil and his angels." And ver. 46. "And theſe, ſpeaking of the wicked, ſhall "go away into everlaſting puniſhment: but the "righteous into life eternal." John v. 28, 29. "The hour is coming in which all that are in their "graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth, "they that have done good unto the reſurrection of "life, and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection of damnation." Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9. ſpeaking of "the revelation of the righteous judgment of GOD, who, ſays the apoſtle, ſhall render "to every man according to his works; to them "who by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for "glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: "but to them that are contentious and obey not the "truth,

" truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and " wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, upon every ſoul " of man that doth evil." SERM. CLXXXII.

II. That the rewards and recompences of the next world ſhall likewiſe bear a proportion to the degrees of good or evil which we have done in this life, though it have been controverted, ſeems alſo to be ſufficiently clear from ſcripture. And to this purpoſe I ſhall,

1. Produce ſuch texts as will fully prove it. And,

2. Anſwer the grounds of the contrary opinion.

1. The ſcripture doth plainly aſſert, that the rewards of the next life will bear a proportion, not only to the kind and quality of our actions, but to the degree of them; that good men ſhall receive a reward proportionable to the degree of their holineſs and obedience, of their ſervice and ſufferings for GOD: and that the torments of the wicked ſhall be greater or leſs, according to the degree and aggravation of their ſins.

(1.) As for good men; that the reward, that ſhall be beſtowed upon them, ſhall bear a proportion to the degree of their ſervice and ſufferings for GOD. This ſeems to be intimated in thoſe metaphorical expreſſions uſed by the prophet Daniel, chap. xii. 3. " They that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the " firmament; and they that turn many to righteouſ- " neſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever." Which is much the ſame with what St. Paul expreſly affirms, concerning the different glory of the ſaints at the reſurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 41. " There is one glory of the ſun, ano- " ther glory of the moon, and another glory of the " ſtars: for one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in " glory. So alſo is the reſurrection of the dead." Matt. v. 10, 11. " Bleſſed are ye, when men ſhall " revile

" revile you, and perſecute you, and ſpeak all man-
" ner of evil againſt you for my name's ſake. Re-
" joice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your
" reward in heaven." Which words, if they do not ſignify a more glorious reward to thoſe who ſuffer perſecution for CHRIST, have no emphaſis or encouragement in them. For what cauſe of " exceeding " joy and gladneſs" is it, to be perſecuted and ſuffer for CHRIST, if a peculiar reward did not belong to thoſe who ſuffer for him? If there do not, then thoſe who ſuffer for CHRIST, are plainly in a worſe condition in this world, than other good men who eſcape theſe ſufferings; and yet are in no better condition, than others in the next world: and then why ſhould any man be glad to ſuffer? Matt. x. 41, 42. " He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a pro-
" phet, ſhall receive a prophet's reward: and he
" that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a
" righteous man, ſhall receive a righteous man's re-
" ward." Where you ſee a difference intimated between " the reward of a prophet, and a righteous " man," namely, that a prophet ſhall have a greater reward than an ordinary good man. Matt. xix. 28, 29. where our bleſſed SAVIOUR tells us, that all that denied themſelves for CHRIST, " ſhall inherit everlaſt-
" ing life;" but for his diſciples, who were continually attendants upon him, and ſufferers for him, that a more eminent degree of glory ſhould be conferred on them; which is expreſs'd by their " ſitting upon
" twelve thrones, to judge the twelve tribes of If-
" rael." But moſt plainly in the parable of the talents, where every man's reward is according to the improvement of his talents. " He that had gained
" five talents, is made ruler over five cities; and he
" that had gained ten talents, ruler over ten cities,"

Luke xix. 15. 1 Cor. xv. 58. "Be ye ſtedfaſt, un- SERM. CLXXXII.
"moveable, always abounding in the work of the "LORD; foraſmuch as you know that your labour "is not in vain in the LORD." But if our reward ſhould not hold a proportion to the degree of our ſervice, it would be in vain to be "abundant in the "work of the LORD." 2 Cor. iv. 17. "Our light "affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for "us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glo-"ry;" that is, our affliction contributes to our glory, and adds to the degree of it. 2 Cor. ix. 6. The apoſtle uſeth this as an argument to perſuade the Corinthians to be very liberal and bountiful to their diſtreſſed brethren, becauſe according to the degree of their charity, would be the degree of their reward. "This I ſay, he that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap "ſparingly, and he that ſoweth plentifully, ſhall reap "plentifully:" than which I cannot imagine any thing can be ſpoken more plainly to this purpoſe. And the ſame argument he uſeth to the Philippians, to ſtir them up to charity, Phil. iv. 17. "Not be-"cauſe I deſire a gift: but I deſire fruit that may "abound to your account;" clearly implying, that the more good we do in this world, the more abundant ſhall be our reward in the next.

(2.) It is likewiſe as plain from ſcripture, that the puniſhment and torment of wicked men will be abated or increaſed proportionably to the degree and aggravation of their ſins. Upon this account our SAVIOUR threatens thoſe who continue impenitent under the goſpel, with more heavy and dreadful puniſhments, and tells us, that "in the day of judgment" their condition ſhall be far worſe than theirs of "Tyre "and Sidon, of Sodom and Gomorrah," Matt. xi. 20, 21. And Matt. xxiv. 51. he threatens that ſervant

8

SERM. CLXXXII.

vant, who, becauſe "his LORD delayed his coming," preſumed ſo much upon the patience of GOD, with a more ſevere puniſhment: "The LORD of that ſervant ſhall cut him in ſunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites;" intimating that the puniſhment of hypocrites will be very ſevere, and as it were the ſtandard of the higheſt puniſhment. And ſo likewiſe, Luke xii. 47, 48. our SAVIOUR tells us, that according to the degree of light and knowledge which men ſin againſt, ſhall be the degree of their torment. "The ſervant that knew his LORD's will, and prepared not himſelf to do according to it, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes: but he that knew it not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few ſtripes." And in general he tells us, that the puniſhment of ſinners takes it's aggravation from the advantages and opportunities which men have neglected. "For unto whomſoever much is given, of him much ſhall be required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more." So likewiſe the apoſtle to the Hebrews tells us, that GOD will vindicate the contempt of the goſpel more ſeverely than of the law of Moſes, Heb. ii. 2, 3, 4. "If the word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward; how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?" And chap. x. 28, 29. "He that deſpiſed Moſes's law died without mercy, under two or three witneſſes; of how much ſorer puniſhment, think ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of GOD?"

So that it ſeems very evident from ſcripture, that the degree of happineſs or miſery which men ſhall be ſentenced to in the next world, ſhall be correſpondent

dent to the degree of good or evil, which they have done in this world; and I can hardly imagine any thing more clear. But it ſeems the ſchoolmen, and other divines who have been at leiſure to tie knots, and to make objections againſt the plaineſt truths, have called this alſo into queſtion. And therefore I ſhall, in the SERM. CLXXXII.

IId. Place, briefly examine the grounds of the contrary opinion; which though they do but immediately ſtrike at the degrees of glory and happineſs, yet by a parity of reaſon and conſequence, they likewiſe overthrow the degrees of puniſhment; and they are theſe two.

I. They ſay, that the merits of CHRIST, by which eternal life and happineſs is purchaſed for us, are equal to all thoſe who have any intereſt in them, and are of value ſufficient to purchaſe the higheſt degree of glory for them; and the meritorious cauſe being the ſame, there is no reaſon to imagine any difference of degrees in the effect.

Anſw. The weakneſs of this objection, how ſpecious ſoever it may appear, will be evident to any one that conſiders, that eternal life and happineſs doth not accrue to us by way of neceſſary and natural reſult from the merit of CHRIST's obedience and ſufferings, but of voluntary compact and agreement, and therefore is only available ſo far as it pleaſed GOD the Father and him that it ſhould be. Now the ſcripture hath declared that "CHRIST is the author "of eternal ſalvation to them that believe and obey "him:" but it hath declared likewiſe, that according to the degrees of our holineſs and obedience ſhall be the degrees of our happineſs; becauſe the happineſs which CHRIST hath purchaſed for us, is not beſtowed upon us but upon certain terms and

SERM. LXXXII.

conditions to be performed on our part, upon the performance whereof, and the degrees of that performance, the degrees of our happineſs do depend.

II. The other objection is from the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, Matth. xx. where it is ſaid, that "they that came in at the laſt hour received as much, as they that came in at the firſt, and had borne the heat and burden of the day, every one his peny." For anſwer to this, It is a known rule among divines, that *theologia parabolica non eſt argumentativa*; by which they mean, that we cannot argue in divinity from every circumſtance of a parable, but only from the main ſcope of it. Now this parable ſeems plainly directed againſt the envious Jews, who murmured becauſe the Gentiles were to partake of the bleſſing of the Meſſias, and that they who were called in the laſt age of the world ſhould ſhare in this benefit, as well as the ancient people of GOD; ſo that by the murmurers, the Jews are deſigned, who were offended that ſalvation ſhould come to the Gentiles. And then the ſcope of the parable is not, that all good men ſhall have equal degrees of glory; but that the Gentiles, which were called long after the Jews, ſhould be ſaved as well as they. I proceed to the

Second thing I propoſed to enquire into, viz. the grounds and reaſons of this, why the rewards which ſhall be diſtributed at the day of judgment, ſhall bear a proportion to the good or evil which men have done in this life? And,

1. That they ſhall be correſpondent to the nature and quality of our actions, the juſtice and equity of the divine providence doth plainly require. For juſtice is to give to every one that which of due belongs to him: now of equity it belongs to them that do

do well, that it ſhould go well with them; and to the evil, that it ſhould be ill with them, that every one ſhould "receive the fruit of his doings." Not that we can ſtrictly merit any thing at the hand of GOD. It is goodneſs to reward an innocent creature, and it is goodneſs to reward the good actions of thoſe who have been ſinners; but juſtice requires that good and bad men ſhould not fare alike. Thus Abraham reaſons from the juſtice of GOD, "that "the righteous ſhould be as the wicked, that be far "from thee: ſhall not the judge of all the world "do right?" And conſidering the promiſes which the goodneſs of GOD hath made freely to good men, for their encouragement in goodneſs, and the performance of theſe promiſes is founded in the righteouſneſs and faithfulneſs of GOD.

2. That the rewards of the next life ſhould bear a proportion to the degree of the good or evil done by us in this life, is clearly founded in the equity and reaſonableneſs of the thing; it being very much for the encouragement of holineſs and goodneſs, to be aſſured that whatever we do for GOD now, will be fully conſidered and rewarded hereafter; that he will take notice of the leaſt ſervice that we do for him, and that every degree of grace and holineſs ſhall be crowned with an anſwerable degree of glory and happineſs. And ſo on the other hand, it tends very much to diſcountenance ſin, and to keep men from running to the height of impiety; to conſider that every ſin will aggravate their miſery, and that every degree of wickedneſs will add to the weight of their torment, and that though they be "children of "wrath" already, yet by "adding iniquity to tranſ-"greſſion," they may cauſe the "wrath of GOD "and his jealouſy to ſmoke againſt them," and bring more

more curſes upon themſelves, and make themſelves "ten times more the children of wrath."

And indeed in the nature of the thing it cannot be otherwiſe, but that the better and more holy any man is, the more capable he ſhould be of happineſs, and the more diſpoſed for the enjoyment of GOD; and the more wicked any man is, the more he ſhould exaſperate his own conſcience, and awaken thoſe furies which rage in his breaſt. "He treaſures up "more wrath againſt the day of wrath," and piles up more fuel for everlaſting burnings. The torments of hell are in ſcripture compared to fire; now the more fuel and greater ſtore of combuſtible matter is caſt into it, the more fierce and raging it muſt be.

I have done with the explication, and ſhall now apply what hath been delivered.

I. If ſentence ſhall be paſt at the great day according to the good or bad actions of men, this ſhews us what ſhould be the great care of every man in this life; to attend to the nature and quality of our actions, and to obſerve that difference between them in our practice now, which our judge will certainly make in the ſentence which he will paſs upon them at the great day. And yet ſo blind and miſtaken is the greateſt part of the world, that they make this the leaſt part of their care and buſineſs. Men are generally very ſolicitous to be rich and great, and to be in a healthful and proſperous condition, and do with all poſſible care ſeek to avoid ſickneſs and poverty and meanneſs: but how few are concerned to be virtuous and good, and to avoid wickedneſs and vice! And yet theſe moral differences of men at the day of judgment will only be taken into conſideration: other things will not "profit us in the day of "wrath."

" wrath." God in that day will not proceed with men according to their outward quality and condition in this life, their eternal ſtate ſhall not then be decided according to their wealth or poverty, their height and meanneſs in this world: it will not then be enquired what office a man bore, what titles of honour, what manors or lordſhips he was owner of, but how he hath behaved himſelf in thoſe circumſtances, what uſe he hath made of his wealth and power, what good or evil he hath done; whether he hath glorified God, and ſerved the great ends of his creation; whether he hath obeyed or diſobeyed the truth; whether he hath lived in " ungodlineſs " and worldly luſts, or ſoberly and righteouſly and " godly in this preſent world;" in a word, whether we have been righteous or wicked. This will be the great enquiry at that day, and theſe qualities, according as they are found with us, will determine our condition for ever.

II. The conſideration of this may comfort good men under the promiſcuous diſpenſations of God's providence in this world. Now " all things gene- " rally happen alike, and there is the ſame event to " the righteous and to the wicked:" but things will not be always thus. Have but a little patience, and the juſtice of God's providence, which is now under a cloud, will clear up; the day is coming which will make a wide and vaſt difference between good and bad men, " between thoſe that ſerve God, and " thoſe that ſerve him not; thoſe that ſwear, and " thoſe that fear an oath;" between the lewd and the chaſte, the ſober and debauched, the meek of the earth and the murderers; between the proud and the humble, the juſt and the oppreſſors; between thoſe that perſecute, and thoſe who are perſecuted for righteouſneſs. Now

SERM. CLXXXII.

Now the difference is frequently on the wrong ſide; good men ſuffer and are afflicted, the wicked flouriſh and are proſperous: but "go into the ſanctuary of GOD, and there thou ſhalt ſee their "end." Let us but look a little before us, beyond "the things which are ſeen and are but temporal, "unto the things which are not ſeen and are eternal," and we ſhall ſee all things ſtraight; that the end of the wicked," who flouriſhed in this world, "is to be deſtroyed for ever; and that the "righteous," who were ſo diſtreſſed and afflicted in this world, "ſhall enter into reſt and joy: when "the days of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence "of the LORD, theſe ſhall be comforted and the "other tormented."

III. If the reward of the next life ſhall bear a proportion to the degrees of good or evil which we have done in this world, then on the one hand here is matter of great comfort and encouragement to us in the ways of holineſs and obedience. This is a mighty argument to good men to grow in grace, and to preſs forward toward perfection, "to be ſted-"faſt and unmoveable and abundant in the work of "the LORD, becauſe they know that their labour "ſhall not be in vain in the LORD;" but that according to the degrees of our ſervice and obedience, of our virtue and goodneſs, ſhall be the degree of our glory and happineſs. We ſerve a good maſter, who will conſider every thing that we do for him; "who is not unrighteous, to forget our work and "labour of love," and will not let the leaſt ſervice paſs unrewarded. Let us not then content ourſelves with any low degree of goodneſs; but be continually aſpiring after the higheſt perfection we are capable of. Since we have ſuch a prize in our view,

"let us run with patience," and with all our might, "the race which is set before us." For by the same reason that any man desires happiness, he cannot but desire the highest degrees of it that are attainable; and will consequently endeavour to make himself capable of the greatest degree of glory: and though no degree of holiness can merit everlasting life and happiness, yet greater degrees of holiness will certainly be rewarded with a larger portion of happiness. God is not bound antecedently to his promise, to give so great a reward to any man for his works; yet he hath promised to reward every man according to them.

So that there is no reason why a good man, when he is once come to this, that by the grace and assistance of God, he can refrain from gross sins, and resist the temptations to them, and perform the great duties of religion, why he should with Esau, sit down and say, "I have enough," I have so much as will carry me to heaven, and I desire no more. It is a sad presage of apostasy, to stand still in religion. He that once stops, the next thing is to look back. This is the remedy which St. Peter prescribes against apostasy, 2 Pet. iii. 18. "Take heed lest ye fall "from your own stedfastness;" and then it follows, "but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The best remedy against apostasy, is growth in goodness. It is a rule in policy, that an ambitious man should never stay at any step of preferment, till he come at the top, because it is some security to be in motion. Our ascent to heaven is steep and narrow, and we are safest when we do not stand still: temptation cannot so well take it's aim at us.

Let us therefore press after the highest degree of

SERM. CLXXXII.

virtue and holineſs, and labour to be as good as we can in this world, that in the next our happineſs may be the greater; that when the day of recompence ſhall come, we may receive an ample reward, and GOD the righteous judge may ſet a bright and glorious crown upon our heads.

We ought likewiſe to conſider, that if any man can be content only to be ſaved, and deſire no more but juſt to get heaven, that ſuch a degree of holineſs and virtue as will ſave a man that can attain no more, will perhaps not ſave that man who lazily reſts in the loweſt degree, and deſires no more. To be "leaſt "in the kingdom of GOD," is next to being ſhut out of it. It is not to be expected that GOD ſhould beſtow heaven and happineſs upon thoſe who are ſo indifferent about it, as to deſire heaven for no other reaſon, but becauſe they would not go to hell. Men muſt not think to drive ſo near and hard a bargain, in ſo deſirable and advantageous a purchaſe.

And then on the other hand, it is matter of great terror to great ſinners. "The wages of every ſin "is death," eternal death; and every degree of hell and damnation is dreadful: but there are ſins more heinous in themſelves, and ſome that are attended with heavier aggravations in ſome perſons; theſe do inflame hell, and heat that furnace ſeven times hotter. There are ſome moderate ſinners in compariſon; theſe ſhall have a moderate doom, and a cooler hell: but there are others, who are extravagant and enormous ſinners, that "drink up iniquity, as "the ox drinks up water; that let themſelves looſe "to commit all wickedneſs with greedineſs;" ſuch as ſin above the common rate of men, with full conſent, and upon deliberation, with great deſign and contrivance, in deſpite of the cleareſt convictions,

of

SERM. CLXXXII.

of the beſt counſels and reproofs; theſe make haſte to ruin, and take hell by violence. Now ſuch "mighty tranſgreſſors ſhall be mightily tormented;" they ſhall not be puniſhed at the common rate of ſinners, their conſciences will breed more and ſharper ſtings, and wilder furies to torment them, and they ſhall ſink into a deeper miſery.

More particularly this concerns us Chriſtians, who continue impenitent, and live in our ſins, notwithſtanding the clear revelation of the goſpel, and "the wrath of GOD revealed from heaven, againſt "all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men; notwithſtanding life and immortality ſo clearly brought "to light by the goſpel. How ſhall we eſcape, if "we neglect ſo great ſalvation?" What condemnation will be heavy enough for thoſe, who wilfully refuſe to be ſaved? This is the condemnation, ſays our SAVIOUR, "that light is come into the world, and "men love darkneſs rather than light." All the ſins which we now commit, are infinitely aggravated above the ſins of thouſands in the world, who never enjoyed that light, and thoſe advantages and opportunities which we have done. "The ignorance of "theſe GOD winked at, but now he expects, he "commands all men every where to repent; be"cauſe he hath appointed a day, in which he will "judge the world in righteouſneſs." What ſtripes do we deſerve, who have "known our maſter's "will, but have not prepared ourſelves to do accord"ing to it?" All that light and knowledge which we have, all thoſe counſels and inſtructions which we have read and heard out of GOD's word, will inflame our account, and heighten our condemnation, and the very means of our ſalvation will be the ſaddeſt aggravation of our ruin. What our SAVI-

SERM. CLXXXI.

OUR ſaid of the impenitent and unbelieving Jews, holds as well concerning impenitent Chriſtians; that "it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for "Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, "than for them. But, beloved, I hope better things "of you, and things that accompany ſalvation." Let us but remember and ſeriouſly conſider, that "we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of "CHRIST, to receive the things done in the body, "according to what we have done, whether good "or evil;" and this will certainly have a mighty awe and influence upon our lives, and all the actions of them.

"Now the GOD of peace, &c."

The END of the NINTH VOLUME.

THE CONTENTS.

SERM. CLVII.

God the first cause, and last end.

ROM. xi. 36.

FOR of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen.

Page 3761.

SERM. CLVIII.

Of doing good.

Being a spital sermon preach'd at *Christ-Church* on *Easter-Tuesday*, *April* 14. 1691.

Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not: as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the houshold of faith,

P. 3776.

SERM. CLIX.

The necessity of repentance and faith.

ACTS xx. 21.

Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, *and faith toward our* Lord Jesus Christ. P. 3797.

SERM. CLX.

Of confessing and forsaking sin, in order to pardon.

Preached on Ash-Wednesday.

PROV.

PROV. xxviii. 13.

He that covereth his ſins ſhall not proſper: but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy, p. 3814.

SERM. CLXI.

Of confeſſion and ſorrow for ſin.

PSAL. xxxviii. 18.

I will declare mine iniquity, and be ſorry for my ſin, p. 3837.

SERM. CLXII

The unprofitableneſs of ſin in this life, an argument for repentance.

Preached on Aſh-Wedneſday, 1689.

JOB xxxiii. 27, 28.

He looketh upon men, and if any ſay, I have ſinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his ſoul from going into the pit, and his life ſhall ſee the light. p. 3854.

SERM. CLXIII, CLXIV, CLXV, CXLVI.

The ſhamefulneſs of ſin, an argument for repentance. The final iſſue of ſin, an argument for repentance. The preſent and future advantage of an holy and virtuous life.

ROM. vi. 21, 22.

What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is death. But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to GOD, *ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life,* p. 3875, 3892, 3905, 3929.

SERM.

SERM. CXLVII, CXLVIII, CXLIX.

The nature and neceſſity of holy reſolution.

JOB xxxiv. 31, 32.

Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto GOD, *I have born chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more: That which I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* 3949, 3964, 3980.

SERM. CLXX, CLXXI.

The nature and neceſſity of reſtitution.

LUKE xix. 8, 9.

And if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him fourfold. And JESUS *ſaid unto him, This day is ſalvation come to this houſe.* 3996, 4013.

SERM. CLXXII.

The uſefulneſs of conſideration, in order to repentance.

DEUT. xxxii. 29.

O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end! 4034.

SERM. CLXXIII.

The danger of impenitence, where the goſpel is preached.

MATT. xi. 21, 22.

Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethſaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes. But I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

SERM. CLXXIV, CLXXV, CLXXVI, CLXXVII.

Of the immortality of the ſoul, as diſcovered by nature, and by revelation.

2 TIM. i. 10.

But is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, *who hath aboliſhed death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the goſpel.* 4067, 4087, 4109, 4122.

SERM. CLXXVIII, CLXXIX, CLXXX. CLXXXI, CLXXXII.

Of the certainty of a future judgment. Of the perſon by whom the world ſhall be judged. Of the perſons who are to be judged. Of the actions for which men will be accountable. Of the ſentence to be paſſed at the day of judgment.

2 COR. v. 10.

For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of CHRIST, *that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* 4144, 4159, 4175, 4188, 4202.